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CELTICS PRIDE



Kevin, Robert and Larry

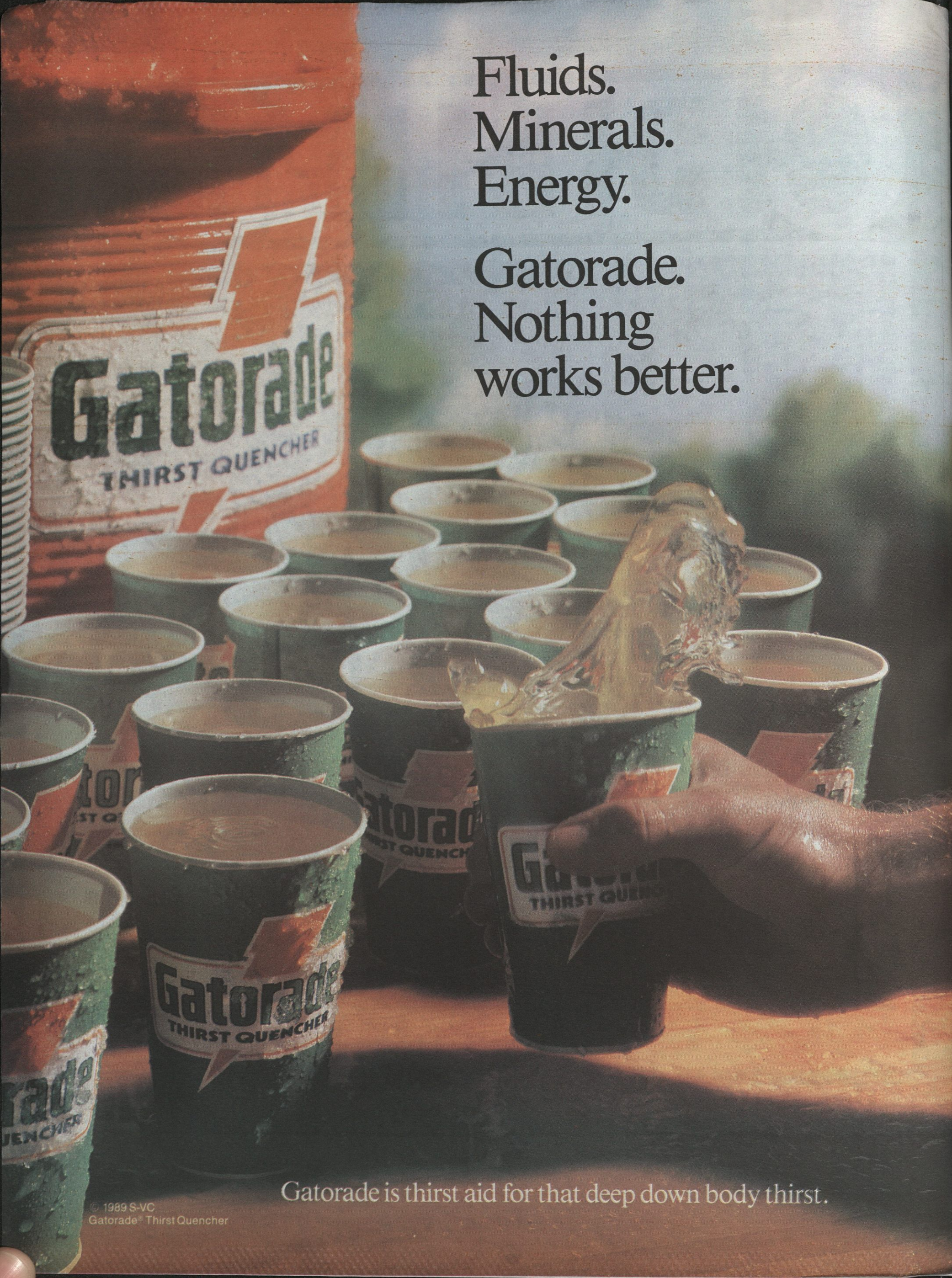


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Volume 5, Issue 7 March 16, 1990 \$3.00

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SOUND OFF

Dear Sound Off,
I am a big Celtics fan and my favorite player is Larry Bird. I like the rest of the team too. I have been a big Celtics fan since I was 10 and now I am 14. I would like to meet Larry in person one day and hope that day comes soon. I wish I could fly to Boston to see a game and meet the whole team. Will the Celtics ever be in Wichita, Kansas for a special appearance? I sure would love to meet them. To Larry, I love you.

Valerie Grass
Burton, Kansas

Nothing is presently planned to play in Wichita. Perhaps in the summer you could travel to Indianapolis for "Larry's Game," a charity event in July. Celtics Pride will let you know the dates.

Dear Sound Off,
I was just wondering if Larry Bird or any of the other Celtics players had a basketball camp during the summer? I really like your magazine.
Brandon Hill
White House, Indiana

Right now the only confirmed Celtics camps are:
1. 30th Annual Red Auerbach Basketball School Inc., 151 Merrimac St., Boston, MA 02114 (617) 523-6050
2. 18th Annual Dave Cowens Basketball School Inc., 433 Grove St., Needham, MA 02192 (617) 235-0678
3. 22nd Annual Don Nelson-Tom Sanders Basketball School, P.O. Box 59, Swampscott, MA 01907 (617) 598-1907
4. Robert Parish All-Star Basketball Camp, 99 Ward St., Manchester, NH 03104 (603) 645-9604 ext. 2017

If any other camps come about we will be happy to publish their information as soon as it is available.

Dear Sound Off,
In the January 19th issue, the question, "What current Celtics can look forward to having their number hanging in the rafters?" Seems to me one very deserving player has been overlooked. He was there in '87 when the Celtics needed him in the playoffs and is still there now. He is #3, D.J. Also, who decides whose laundry hangs in the rafters?

Ronda Shirley
Indianola, Oklahoma

Probably the biggest reason that you don't see number 3 in the rafters is that D.J. hasn't retired yet. You can expect to see many of the numbers of the current starting team hanging in the rafters eventually.

The decision on hanging laundry is made by a committee of Celtics owners and front office.

Dear Sound Off,
How is Brian Shaw doing this season? Is he continuing to improve? What are his stats?
Bill Koehler
Taunton, Massachusetts

With the competition being what it is in Europe, it is hard to tell whether he is improving. However, Brian's statistics are pretty good. In twenty games in Italy he is averaging 25.1 points and 10 rebounds per game. Danny Ferry, who is also playing for the same team, is averaging 22.6 points and 7 rebounds per game. Ferry does have more assists than Brian.

Dear Sound Off,
Watching the Celtics the last 3-4 weeks on TV, I've noticed Kevin McHale's new found 3-point range. I've also heard the commentators, especially on TNT, remark several times that before the start of the season, Kevin had made only one shot from that range and it was against Utah. Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't Kevin make a 3-pointer against Detroit in the Eastern Conference Finals about 3 years ago to win the game?
William Frazier
Lynchburg, VA

You are absolutely right. However, the announcers were referring to regular season statistics which are kept separately by the NBA.

Dear Sound Off,
This year people have been saying that the Celtics aren't playing well. To put it simply, people are wrong. All things considered, the Men in Green are playing excellent basketball, and I'm proud to be a Celtics fan.

At present, the Celts are at .600 and are fighting for first place against the Knicks and 76ers, two of the best teams in the Eastern Conference. Right now, the Celtics are only 3 games out of first place, which is next to nothing in the NBA. Larry is nearly fully recovered and is as great as ever, and Kevin and Robert are at the top of their form. With our starting lineup, the new depth at bench, and a coach as basketball-smart as Jimmy Rodgers, #17 could very well be within reach. I just wanted to try and clear things up for some of those people who are down on Larry and the Celtics.

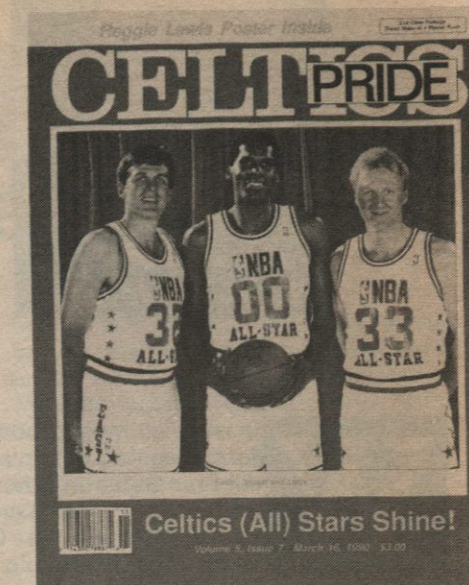
Wakely Walker
Gallup, New Mexico

Unfortunately or fortunately, the Celtics have set such a high standard in the past that their current record is not acceptable to some fans. They should keep in mind that there is still a lot of experimenting and fine tuning going on.

The Celtics management is not as concerned about their present record as they are having this team ready to play its best basketball in the playoffs. There is no question that the Celtics will be in the playoffs. Look for the "Green" to continue to "fine tune" all the way into April.

CELTICS PRIDE

Volume 5
Issue 7
Number 87



COVER

8.... Kevin, Robert and Larry —
What would an All-Star Game be without them. The Celtics big three all personify the word All-Star. Again this year they represented the East in grand fashion by leading them to victory over the West in the nationally televised event in Miami.
Photo by Steve Lipofsky

FEATURES

19.... Kevin Gamble has had a very interesting two years. He had to struggle hard to get out of the CBA and when he did get to the NBA, he looked great at the end of last year. This season has been up and down for Kevin. Celtics Pride recently had the opportunity to sit down and talk to him about it.

DEPARTMENTS

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A Weston Communications Publication

Publisher:
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Celtics Pride (ISSN 0897-8379) is published twice per month during basketball season (October through May), and monthly in the off-season (June through September), for a total of 20 issues each year, by Weston Communications, Inc., 85 Old Long Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903. Second class postage is paid at Stamford, CT and additional entry offices. Subscription rate is \$30.00 for 20 issues (1 year). Canadian subscriptions are \$60.00 (US) for 20 issues.
Postmaster, please send address changes to Celtics Pride, 85 Old Long Ridge Road, Stamford, CT 06903.
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MARCH 16, 1990

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RED ON ROUNDBALL

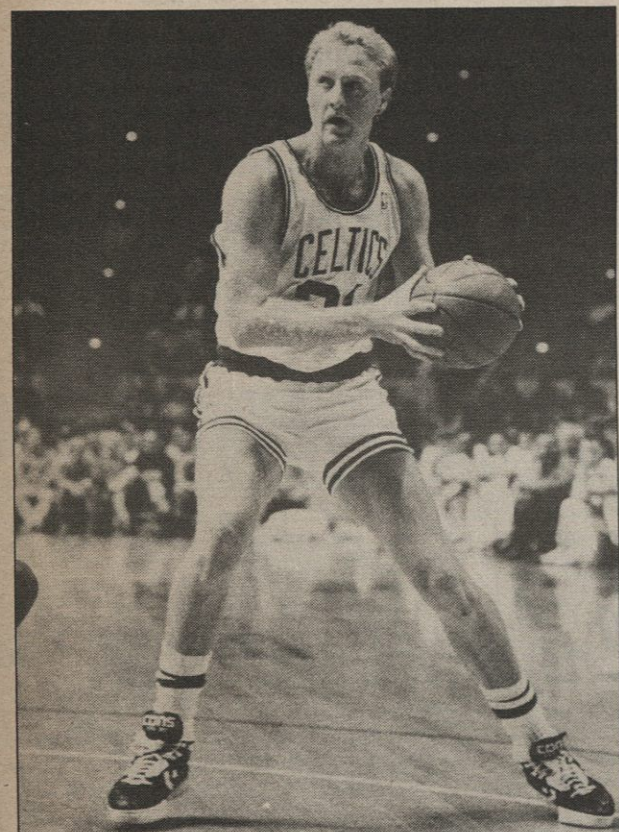
Utilizing Strengths

By Red Auerbach

We were all very proud of the performance of our players in the All-Star Game in Miami last week. In Robert Parish, Larry Bird and Kevin McHale, the Celtics have three of the best big men in the game.

A team that has that type of talent on its front line would be foolish not to try and take full advantage of it. We have tried to change a few things here in the past few seasons. It was necessary because of the changes in personnel and approach that was taking place across the entire NBA.

In the past five years, we were more of a halfcourt team. We had veteran talent and we have the type of attack that lent itself best to the type of offense



Larry's back, with great expectations

you could derive from working the ball in the halfcourt. By setting up players such as Larry and Kevin and then reversing the ball around the perimeter to some of our other people, we could get teams to readily adjust to what we were doing.

But, of course, last season things changed. We were never healthy last year. Larry missed virtually the entire year with his heel surgery. We also had Dennis Johnson and Jim Paxson out with injuries for a good part of the year. And around the league we were seeing new guys coming in their own and increasing the tempo of the game. Michael Jordan nearly took the Bulls to the championship by himself; Cleveland had a great season with young guys like Brad Daugherty and John Williams; Isiah Thomas has always been one of the great players in our game and he was a force to lead the Pistons to the championship. In the West, LA continued to be tough (Magic Johnson is an outstanding basketball player). But Phoenix was a new up tempo ballclub and even though they were upset, the Jazz with Karl Malone proved they were a legitimate championship con-

tender.

In other words, the entire scene had been altered since we had (1) been successful primarily with the halfcourt game and (2) had Larry Bird at full strength, a player who not only could personally dictate tempo by being a superstar but the type of player who could personally win games for you by being totally without fear in pressure situations.

Now I don't want to make a claim here that is false. Larry's had some inconsistent times this season because people forget he'd been out of the game for an entire year. You just can't get everything back overnight and it's been particularly frustrating for a player like Bird, who expects so much of himself. I think that might be a reason for some of the dissatisfaction that we've had here at times this season. We all have such high expectations for success in Boston and we always have.

When things aren't going the way they normally do, or the way they have gone in past years, you get edgy. But that's the nature of this business. We are all very competitive, and especially for Larry, things can get frustrating when we lose games we normally win. Larry's made the point on several occasions when he's talked about the homecourt. We have always dominated at home. It's very disappointing to lose games here when we once had

a season, for example, when we lost only once in the Boston Garden.

I think we played some fine ball on the west coast last week. There were a number of reasons for this, but a few of them were that we were finally playing better to our strengths. In other words, even with our best fast break playmaker, John Bagley, out there, we didn't run just to run. When the break was there, we took it. Secondly, we had great performances from players like Robert, Kevin and Larry, the inside game. I can't go along with people who criticize these guys as being "too old." They are well-conditioned athletes, and they bounce back

“We all have such high expectations for success in Boston and we always have. . . . We have to play our very best to compete for anything this season. We need every edge.”

well. They don't go out and run around. They have great pride in their games and should be effective players for the next two years. Finally, we were going after the ball on the boards and onto the floor for loose balls. We have to play our very best to compete for anything this season. We need every edge. Seeing our guys want it, and then coming out of those efforts with some wins, was particularly encouraging.

CELTICS

CATCH ALL THE ACTION ON WLVI 56

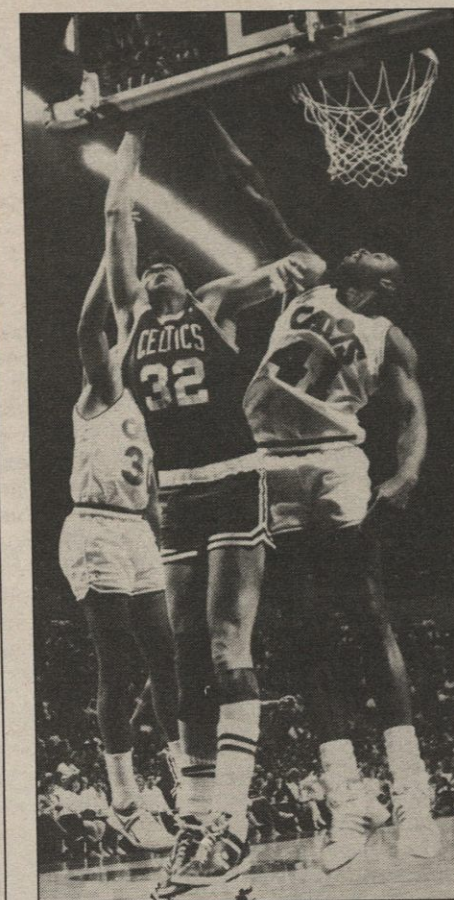
The Celtics' Home Away From Home!

CELTICS CONFIDENTIAL

Contending in the Wild West

Long and Winding Road West. Celts embarked on their annual February road-swing west last week, beginning with the Texas stop, back to back against Akeem Olajuwon and Houston and David Robinson, Maurice Cheeks and the San Antonio Spurs. From there, it's Portland and the Los Angeles Lakers over the weekend of Feb. 16th-18th, and then in the concluding week, Phoenix, Utah and the Denver Nuggets. . . . Robert Parish, off a MVP-caliber performance in the All-Star Game (21 minutes, 7-11 FGs, 14 points, 4 rebounds, 2 assists and a block) on the Celtics' chances: "Most people expect us to go 0-8. We know that. We know it wouldn't surprise anyone except the members of this team if we go 0-8. I know I'm putting my neck on the line, but I think we can be 5-3," Parish told *The Boston Globe*. "We've proven we can play strong defense in spots; we did it against the Lakers, Detroit and the Knicks. You don't have to be the quickest player in the league to play defense, but you have to be mentally tough." . . . Dennis Johnson, as reported in *Celtics Pride* last issue, was on the trip and hopeful of playing significant minutes, as early as the Houston contest. "I have much greater flexibility than I had thought I'd have," DJ commented. Johnson, who is an early attendee at practice daily, to receive therapy on his Achilles tendon from Trainer Ed Lacerte, received additional treatment from Lacerte during the All-Star break. Johnson injured his right quadricep after being shoved by the Knicks' Charles Oakley in Boston's 97-91 win, Jan. 31. Ed Badger, the Charlotte Player Personnel Director on John Bagley: "Bagley's a good player for the Celtics. His biggest test is being able to stay ready, coming off the bench if he's going to play limited minutes behind DJ. I do know one thing about Bagley, though," Badger continued. "He's a great clutch player. In the last two minutes of a game, he's as good as any. I can remember at least a dozen occasions when he's been outstanding in the closing minutes of a game." . . . The 76ers' Charles Barkley, on the difficulties Larry Bird's had this season: "When you've got a Mercedes, you should drive it. You've got to realize that it's tough for people up there at the top. We're expected to put 20 on the board every night, get 10 boards, play well and put on a good show for the people. If you all think Larry shoots too much, send him to Philadelphia. I think we'll be able to find room for him." Larry Bird and Earvin Magic Johnson appeared together live during the Pre-game show before the All-Star Game on CBS with Pat O'Brien. Central Quotes: Magic: "Larry is the only opponent I've feared in my career. With the Lakers, I know we can defeat anyone. But it's different against a Larry Bird team. He can

always find a way to beat you." Bird on Magic: "He's a winner. Magic is a great player and what I respect about him most is that he comes to play (hard) every night. There aren't a lot of players in the league who do." . . . Legendary voice of the Celtics, Johnny Most, was in New York recently and appeared on the New York Sports Radio station, WFAN, with Bill Mazur. . . . It shouldn't surprise that Johnny, fierce loyalist, gave the great Bird a slight edge over Magic. "Because I'd still rather have Larry when it comes to the outside shot," opined Most. . . . Bird told Bob Ryan of *The Boston Globe* that he wished he had worked harder in conditioning his legs. "I didn't realize how much work I needed in playing every night," he stated after the one year layoff due to heel surgery. . . . Red Auerbach scouted Georgetown in recent days, when the Hoyas hosted Syracuse January 27th and then again when Georgetown played in Madison Square Garden against St. John's. . . . Bird had 68 consecutive Free Throws when the C's resumed play in Houston Feb 13th. Bird has declined to shoot Technical Fouls until the streak ends, deferring to Kevin McHale. McHale registered another 3-point fg in the East-West Game last week. . . . "I want into the next 3-Point Field Goal contest," McHale commented during the All-Star Weekend. . . . Coach Jimmy Rodgers was unconvinced that a trade involving the Celtics would happen. "I don't foresee it happening at this



Kevin wants into the next three point contest

point," Rodgers commented to *The Boston Globe* before the Celtics

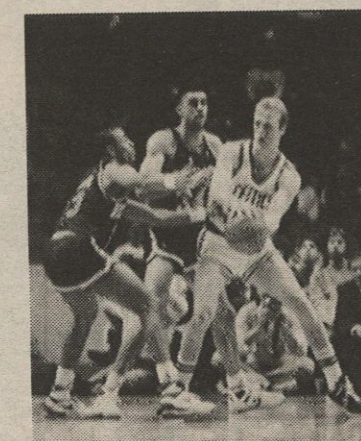
played in Portland. "Everyone starts talking this time of year and it's hard to tell what's real and what isn't. . . . My plan is to finish the season with this team unless something unexpected occurs." . . . Buck Williams of the Trail Blazers on the potency of the Celtics: "People talk about the Celtics as if they weren't a contender but I know better. I played against those guys for eight years. Larry Bird, Kevin McHale and Robert Parish make them the best there is inside. And a team is always fired up to play them. All you have to see is that Celtic green." . . . Plans to retire Dennis Johnson's number at Pepperdine University last week while the Celtics were in Los Angeles to play the Lakers were postponed. The Celtics were practicing at the time the University had wanted to stage the ceremony. . . . The Celtics' Jan Volk was named to the *Games Committee of USA Basketball*, the governing body for the sport in international competition, by David Stern, commissioner of the league. . . . The C's GM was named along with Charles Grantham, executive director of the NBA Players Association Billy Cunningham, part owner of the Heat; Bob Bass, President of the San Antonio Spurs, Donnie Walsh, president of the Indiana Pacers, and Detroit GM Jack McClosky. . . . Russell Granick, deputy commissioner of the NBA is vice president of the USA Basketball. Also on the board as at large members are Rod Thorn of the NBA and Wayne Embry, Cleveland General Manager.

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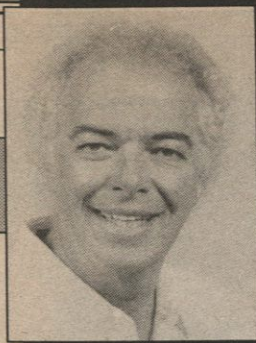
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By Jimmy Rodgers

COACH'S CORNER

The Western Trip

I was very pleased with the start of our trip west. All season we've been seeking out a consistency base, and during the beginning stages of the roadswing, we finally were able to get defensive intensity and effective offensive execution in both back-to-back games and against quality teams.

I'm the first to admit it; though we're in the hunt for the best record in the Eastern Conference, and in a real struggle to win 1st place in the Atlantic Division, we could be out in front.

There have been five or six games we lost in the first half that we should have won. I elaborated on the disappointing loss in Washington. A similar loss was the one in Minneapolis, when we couldn't get untracked for virtually the entire contest. Tony Campbell lit us up and Minnesota beat us, 116-106.

But how do you figure it? After important wins over Detroit, and then more recently over the Knicks, we were unable to sustain our defensive intensity to defeat the Timberwolves. Kevin McHale made the remark about our inconsistency, that he couldn't tell about our team from game to game

any longer. Not only that, he couldn't predict us from quarter to quarter. Nevertheless, the secret to success in this league is working hard every night and improving as a team, learning from the most recent game, win or lose. After Minnesota beat us, we defeated the Kings and the Hornets at home by wide margins but lost to the Bucks in Hartford. We were off for the break after the Hornet win.

Over the break, I did something a little different. My wife Donna and I decided to skip the All-Star Game. I spent most of the weekend in my office watching game films of our team, and of our opponents on the present trip. There are obvious characteristics about our team; we have a terrific offense, particularly inside with Larry Bird, Kevin McHale and Robert Parish. Reggie Lewis, John Bagley, and before he was injured, Dennis Johnson, have all provided us with important lifts during the season. DJ was playing the best ball of the past three seasons before he was injured. We have played some outstanding defense this season when we defeated the Pistons and the Knicks and playing some important stretches of denial against LA. We demonstrated a com-

mitment necessary to win.

We have some weaknesses. Because we are a veteran team, we have some problems in stretches when we have four games in five nights. I was glad to get the break time for our team. Also we have had our problems against some of the younger teams in the league. The Bucks outran us in Hartford (119-106). Against the Spurs in Boston, we had some problems with their pressure. The NBA is competitive. We are one of the best teams in the league but no longer can we go out and dominate. However, we are progressing because we, now more than ever, understand our strengths and weaknesses as a team. I think we're much better at reading defenses, therefore knowing when to run and when to pull it back and execute in the halfcourt. In the initial stages of the trip, we were taking much better care of the basketball, and that in turn was preventing other teams from burning us in transition.

I think we saw some very concrete examples of our development as a team in our first two games on the trip. Against Houston, Larry came out firing, and we were able to build a lead and make them chase us all night. I

thought John Bagley and Dennis Johnson (who we're spotting right now as he comes off his quadriceps injury) then ran the offense extremely well in the halfcourt. The following night in San Antonio, we avenged our earlier defeat in Boston by running the break perhaps the best we have since I've been head coach. Charles Smith came in and gave us a significant lift, and everyone contributed. And these types of games have spinoff effects. Our defense was outstanding in both games. We limited both the Rockets and Spurs to less than 100 points. We were diving to the floor throughout both games, converting the small plays into positive ones. Our General Manager Jan Volk, the coaching staff and I are all aware of the potential of this team. We can win and it could be this season. I think we're working hard at it every day, which is the type of attitude a team must have, especially on a road trip that's as long as this one is. The airports, hotels and arenas all interweave, appearing the same after a week or ten days.

We're looking at the final stages of the season when we come home. This is one of the benefits of hitting the West in February. The Pistons and 76ers are hot teams right now, and the Knicks won five in a row in mid-month. Detroit has 16 of 28 at home beginning in March. New York 15 home-13 away. The 76ers (on a western trip concurrent with us), beginning at home, then playing 11 on the road, compared to our schedule in March, when we play 14 at home and 13 on the road. I'm uncertain if you can detect an advantage here. Momentum is a factor. So too are injuries.

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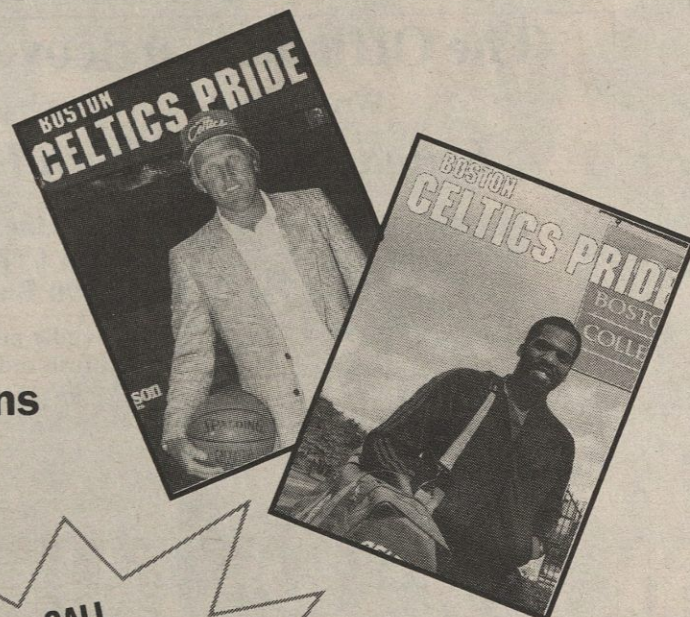
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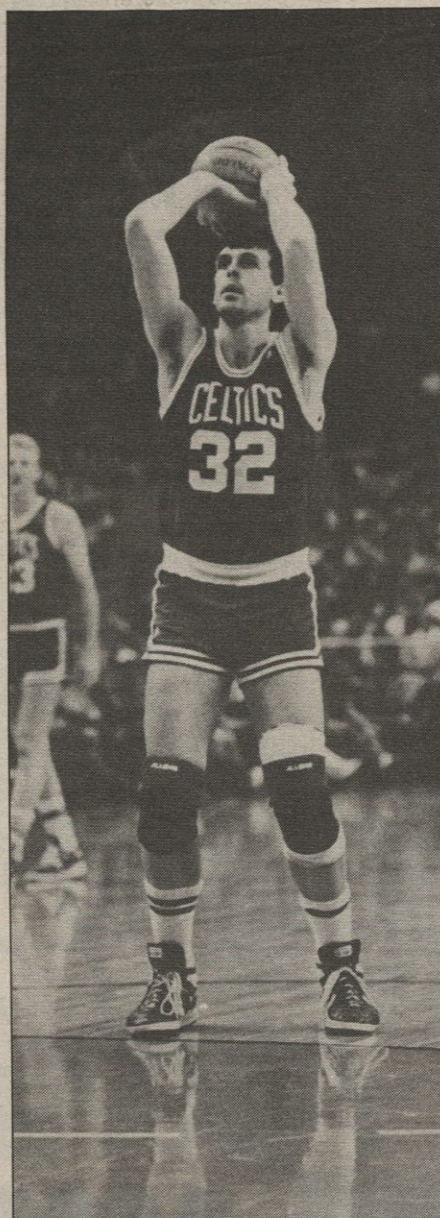
Parish Heads Celtic All-Stars in East Victory

An MVP Performance for Robert

His teammates would greet him days later, when the Celtics headed to the West Coast, with chants of "MVP." Such was the magnitude of Robert Parish's performance in the East-West All-Star Game last week. The East defeated the West 130-113; Parish, in 21 minutes, was 7-for-11 from the floor with 4 rebounds, 2 assists and a steal. Fellow Celtic All-Stars Larry Bird and Kevin McHale were also key contributors, Bird, a starter, helped close out the win in the final quarter with 8 points, 8 rebounds, 3 assists and 3 steals, McHale tossed in 13 points including a 3-point FG and also had 8 rebounds.

"You want to make your presence felt in a game like this," Parish stated afterward, "But I didn't think I had any shot at the MVP. That usually goes to the player who scores the most points."

The East led early, 22-19, and then behind the Parish-led second team (if "second team" is an appropriate designation for All-Stars) ran off an 18-4



Kevin: Had a lot of fun

surge to effectively silence the West. The East led at all quarter stops 40-23, 65-52, and 100-83 after three quarters. The West, behind MVP Magic Johnson, twice cut the margin to 9 points (116-107 the final time) in the 4th quarter, but the East pulled away again. Utah's Karl Malone, absent because of a sprained ankle, was missed by the West.

McHale said, "I thought both Patrick Ewing and Robert were MVP's, their stats were tremendous, but Robert had a strong shot at it."

Parish told *The Boston Herald*, "You want to play well if you're out there, and you want to play well against the younger centers (the West's Akeem Olajuwon and David Robinson, e.g.). They're the future, and you want them to see what you can do. And I'm still here for a while. Age is only a number (Parish is 36). Just because people say I'm getting older isn't any reason to retire. If I can still play and be a force, I'll still play. I never thought I'd be interested in basketball to play it this long, let alone get paid for it. So this

isn't life or death for me. I'm here now and I can still play."

McHale appeared in his first All-Star Game in 1984, the season he was unofficially designated the Sixth Man for K.C. Jones's coaching staff. Bird has been an All-Star since his first season in the league in 1979-80. And since coming to Boston with the draft rights to McHale in the 1980-81 season, Parish has made the star team from the East eight times. The three have played together in the classic on four occasions. The continuity this provides on a team of players from separate teams, regardless of the talent level, is critical to the team's



Larry helped close out the win

success. "That's definitely true," commented Chuck Daly, the East coach. "The Celtics have been here so many times. They know what they have to do to win."

Of course, much of the attention was focused on Bird, for this was his return Game, the first since his lost season to heel surgery a year ago. "Larry's

presence helps us," observed the Pistons' Isiah Thomas. "He has always been a great player — a superstar who's been committed to winning for the team since he's been in the league. Bird's relatively subdued performance of 8-points-8 rebounds-assists-3 steals failed to alter Thomas's view. A secondary spotlight: Bird's defense of his 3-Point Field Goal Shootout championship. For the first time since he's participated, Bird was defeated, managing 13 points to fall below the 15 required to advance. Perhaps the fact that Bird missed last year's competition affected him, because he failed to shoot all of the 25 balls on his rack. After attempting 23, Bird commented, "I couldn't believe I couldn't get off all the shots. I never have had any problems getting off shots. But I didn't get into any rhythm and you can't leave two or three balls and expect to win." Wait until next year. And Bird, who loves the green, experienced the setback as an imaginary dent in his wallet. "I feel like I went to Las Vegas and just lost \$20,000. I had a chance to win 20 grand. I let it slip away."

McHale, who's been outstanding for the Celtics since December, was critical to the Eastern Conference victory. It's been eons ago since McHale entered the All-Star scene as a 6th man interloper, scoring 10 points in 11 minutes on 3-of-7 from the floor in 1984.

"Oh, I never have been worried about these games," McHale commented. "From the start, I was glad to be in All-Star games. Over time, if there maybe were some jitters, they go away once you get out on the floor. And especially now; I'm the veteran player now and there's a certain standard you want to maintain. That's why I wanted to play in all of them," he continued, alluding to the 1986 contest when he played in the classic (8 points-10 rebounds) with an Achilles tendon injury and missed several subsequent regular season contests. "I enjoy the game, period. With an All-Star team, there's an opportunity to play the game and play it at its highest level. That, plus the factor that the game doesn't count in the standings. Hey, nobody is more serious than I am in trying to get the Celtics back on a consistent track. I've talked about it all year. But I love playing and in the All-Star game, you play to have fun."

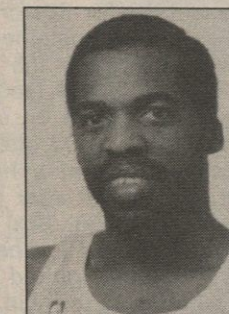
Parish, Bird and McHale: three athletes who have reached the pinnacle, confident enough in their abilities to be All-Stars. Bill Russell once observed that a superstar must have a large ego, because without it, he'd never attempt to take over ballgames. Parish the generous detached one; Bird the temperamental genius; McHale the playful *artiste* flying through the air down in the post. As they say, the three men have taken their game to another level — the All-Star level.

PERSPECTIVE

Turning Points

The Celtics were asked about their careers recently. The players in the National Basketball Association have reached an elevated level in their profession. They have been the players who have survived the final cuts. Some have been All-American stars and have enjoyed recognition throughout their careers, such as the Celtics' Larry Bird. But there have been other paths, such as the one taken by the rookie guard, Charles Smith. Whether the player has been a high profile star, or an industrious type such as Smith or Kevin Gamble, they are success stories in this league. The Celtics Perspective this issue focuses on the players' turning points: What key event can the player look back on as the marker situation which then propelled him forward in his career?

JOHN BAGLEY. The key choice for me was going to college. For me, getting the opportunity to compete at a major college level was critical for the exposure and for the competition against a larger pool of players. I found I was able to adjust and play pretty well in the Big East, and it made it that much easier when I got to the NBA.



John Bagley

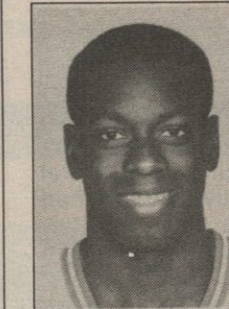


Reggie Lewis

KEVIN McHALE. I think one of the best experiences for me was at the University of Minnesota. We were on probation my freshman season, but we (Mychal Thompson and Ray Williams were two guys on the team) had a great season anyway under (coach) Jim Dutcher. He showed us, I think, that we could play and play hard and still have fun. We went 24-3, and we all played well. I'll always remember that season.

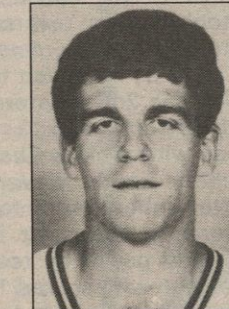


Kevin McHale

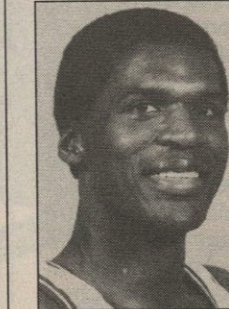


Eddie Pinckney

JOE KLEINE. Without a doubt, the turning point of my career was when I was traded here. When I was with the Kings, I became sort of numb. We were playing out the string from the beginning of the season. Here, it's competitive, the focus is on winning, but more importantly, the focus is on basketball.

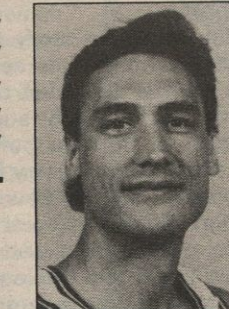


Joe Kleine

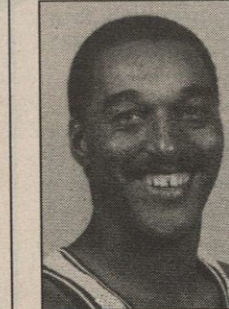


Robert Parish

JIM PAXSON. It happened during the Pre-Season of my second year. I had a rough rookie season, and my confidence was still shaky. Then in the first exhibition game, I shot 1-for-10 and I was worried. But, in the 2nd game, suddenly it fell into place. I shot 9-for-10 from the floor, felt good, and I played well from that time on.

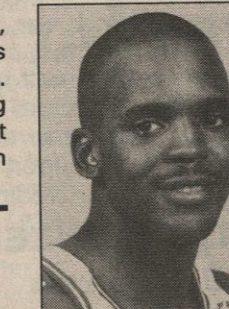


Jim Paxson



Dennis Johnson

KEVIN GAMBLE. The last six games of last season when, after having been on the bench for the entire time I was with the Celtics, I got a shot at playing and played well. (Ed. Note: averaged 21 ppg in 6 starts). That was the turning point. I don't know what I would have done if this hadn't happened. But I guess I do know. I would have kept on trying.



Kevin Gamble



Larry Bird

REGGIE LEWIS. Receiving my scholarship to Northeastern. I had an opportunity to be out on my own, to meet new people. By being able to expand my opportunity and choices, I just matured more.

EDDIE PINCKNEY. For me, the critical event was winning the NCAA championship when I was a senior at Villanova University. Everything about the experience was important — playing well, dealing with the media, coping with the pressure, and then winning. It was unforgettable.

ROBERT PARISH. I think the answer is fairly obvious. It was being traded here from the Warriors. We weren't going anywhere in Oakland. Here, we've won three championships and have gone everywhere!

DENNIS JOHNSON. When I was traded to the Celtics. This was significant because it was the second time I had been traded. I realized then that basketball was indeed a business, that a guy could be traded over and over and that I had to play my best to solidify my position not only on the team, but in the league.

LARRY BIRD. There have been several really. Playing here with a great team and great players, winning the MVP. A most recent one was kind of disappointing; in 1987-88, early that season I injured my heels in a game in Cleveland. I was in the best shape of my career then and really feeling good about the team and my game. Since then, I've had to make a number of adjustments to play the way I think I can play.



GAME BY GAME REVIEW

FEBRUARY 2 MINNESOTA 116 BOSTON 105 HUMPHREY METRODOME

Tony Campbell scored 44 points and the Minnesota Timberwolves outscored the Boston Celtics 11-2 in the final two minutes to send the expansion team to the win. Rookie Pooh Richardson added 21 points and 10 assists for Minnesota which won before a crowd of 35,713.

Larry Bird (18 points, 11 assists, 9 rebounds) had tallied a difficult fadeaway jumper from the left corner to give the visiting Celtics their final lead of the contest at 103-102 with 1:51 left. But Campbell took over down the stretch. Kevin McHale led the Celtics in scoring with 26 points and Robert Parish had 10 rebounds for Boston which lost to one of the four recent expansion teams for the first time in its history.

FEBRUARY 4 BOSTON 121 SACRAMENTO 89 BOSTON GARDEN

Kevin McHale scored 21 points and rookie Mike Smith scored career high in points (16) and assists (8) to highlight the Celtics' easy win over the visiting Kings. McHale's first of two 3-point field goals edged the C's in front 22-19 late in the first quarter and Boston never trailed again. The combination of McHale-M. Smith-Joe Kleine-Kevin Gamble-and Reggie Lewis broke the game open in a second quarter fusillade. They outscored Sacramento 33-10 in a 9:35 span to construct an insurmountable 59-31 advantage.

Seven players scored in double figures for Boston, including 16 by Jim Paxson, playing his most significant minutes since Reggie Lewis took over the starting two guard position in Miami on January 13th. The Kings were led by the since-departed Kenny Smith (traded to Atlanta February 13th) with 18 points. Danny Ainge was plagued with foul problems in his first appearance in the Garden since last year's trade. Ainge had two points but led the Kings with 10 assists.

FEBRUARY 6 MILWAUKEE 119 BOSTON 106 HARTFORD CIVIC CENTER

Former Celtics Brad Lohaus and Fred

Roberts keyed a fourth quarter rally as the Milwaukee Bucks upset the Celtics in Hartford. The Celtics, led by Kevin McHale (28 points-11 rebounds) and Larry Bird (24 points) had led after one, 33-26 and at halftime, 59-56. But Robert and Paul Pressey sparked a 9-4 run in the 3rd quarter and the late rally charged the Bucks with momentum. Lohaus (10 points & 10 rebounds) scored the first of two 3-point FGs to open up a 92-88 lead with 8:20 left. This was followed by a Bird three on the next possession, but in quick succession, Jack Sikma, Alvin Robertson and Paul Pressey scored to build a 98-91 lead with 6:11 left. Two minutes later, Lohaus's second 3-point FG keyed a decisive 14-2 Milwaukee surge. Roberts and Sikma led the Milwaukee Bucks with 20 points and Robertson had a game-high 17 assists.

FEBRUARY 7 BOSTON 146 CHARLOTTE 125 BOSTON GARDEN

Boston exploded on the offensive end, scoring their highest single-game total for the season and tallying 80 1st half points to easily strike down the Hornets. Kevin McHale led the Celtics with 31 points (including 3-of-4 three-pointers) and Reggie Lewis shot 12-of-18 from the floor to score 26.

The highlight of the game for the visiting Hornets, losers of 20 of 21 on the road, was artistic only; the visitors combined with the Celtics to score on eight consecutive shots and 12 of 13 1st quarter possessions. But the Celtics scored a 14-4 run to close out the 1st quarter and won easily. A pair of Ed Pinckney (14 points-5 rebounds-1 block) built the lead to 77-57 late in the half, and the C's had their biggest lead at 135-91 in the 4th. Armon Gilliam scored 26 and Tyrone Bogues notched 18 assists to provide Charlotte highlights. The game was the final one for the Celtics before the All-Star break and they played their previous four without Dennis Johnson, injured 1/31 vs. NY.

FEBRUARY 13 BOSTON 107 HOUSTON 94 THE SUMMIT

Larry Bird scored 38 points, including 25 in the 1st half, as the Celtics started their telltale western road trip with an impressive win over the Houston Rock-

ets. Boston won despite the grueling 22 point-17 rebound-4 block-2 steal performance of Akeem Olajuwon. Celtic centers Robert Parish and Joe Kleine were injured in the opening half against the steely Akeem, who in Sunday's All-Star Game was outstanding when he also pulled down 16 boards. Both centers were able to return later for Boston.

The Celtics sustained the lead after a 14-4 run late in the 1st quarter and had built a 33-21 lead with 1:03 left. The Celtics went on to lead 55-49 at the half and 79-77 after three. Reggie Lewis's (25 points) shooting kept the C's in front but after Houston closed to within 89-88, Bird took over. He nailed a critical jumper after a Celtic timeout and ignited a 12-2 surge which sealed the win. Bird also had 14 rebounds and 3 steals. Otis Thorpe scored 24 and pulled down 14 boards for the Rockets. Bird's free throw streak ended, however; he missed his first FT after 71 consecutive free throws at 4:17 of the third quarter. The streak began on December 20th.

FEBRUARY 14 BOSTON 106 SAN ANTONIO 95 HEMISFAIR ARENA

The Celtics' bench blazed a 19-0 run through the Spurs in a critical 2nd quarter run and spurred the visiting Celtics to an upset win over San Antonio. Boston reversed an early San Antonio runaway, coming back from an early 31-14 deficit to assume control in the 2nd quarter. Kevin McHale with 28 points and 13 rebounds, combined with rookies Charles Smith and Michael Smith, Kevin Gamble and starter Robert Parish to dominate San Antonio at this point. The Spurs had led early paced by rookie star David Robinson who scored 12 of the Spurs' first 24 points and led all scorers with 32. Robinson also had 6 blocks and was supported by Terry Cummings's 20 points.

However, the story this night was Boston, winning its second game of two on this extended trip. Boston led at the half, 55-45 and opened the margin to thirteen before SA rallied within 87-83. But Larry Bird (20 points-12 rebs), Reggie Lewis (24 points), Robert Parish (13 rebounds and a force underneath) and McHale combined to expand the lead again. Spurs coach Larry Brown removed Robinson to press late, but McHale's turnaround

effected a 101-92 margin and the C's held on.

FEBRUARY 16 PORTLAND 120 CELTICS 101 MEMORIAL COLISEUM

Jerome Kersey scored 24 points with 13 rebounds and former Atlantic Division rival Buck Williams added 23 points and 12 boards as the Portland Trail Blazers broke open a close game after halftime. The defeat was the first suffered by the Celtics on their eight game February trip. Kevin McHale led the Celtics with 34 points (season high) and keyed a 1st quarter lead of 32-26 for Boston. But Clyde Drexler (21 points-9 assists) joined Kersey and Williams to spur the Blazers to a 36 point 2nd quarter. Larry Bird (21 points-8 rebounds) scored 7 points in the final minute of the 1st half to keep the score close at 62-55. But the Blazers, sporting the third best record of all teams in the league with a 36-14 mark, pulled away after halftime. The Blazers' win over Boston gave them back to back wins over the Celtics and their previous foe, the Lakers.

FEBRUARY 18 LOS ANGELES 116 BOSTON 110 THE GREAT WESTERN FORUM

Magic Johnson scored 30 points, 13 assists and three 3-Point FGs in the 3rd quarter to rally the home-standing Lakers to a win over Boston. Boston outshot the Lakers from the floor in a fine effort (48-78, .615 for the Celtics, 44-93 for LA); however the Lakers were 6-10 in three pointers, including guard Byron Scott's perfect 3-for-3 shooting from this range. Boston led from the late minutes of the 1st quarter until Johnson's surge; the lead reached 55-46 late in the half before LA closed to within 6 at the break, 58-52. Boston would shoot 9-for-10 in the 3rd quarter when Johnson's sniping took effect and the Lakers' 40 point 3rd quarter continued to close the margin as Boston led 94-92 after three. LA took over in the final stanza, utilizing a twin pivot alignment in Michael Thompson and Vlade Divac to neutralize Kevin McHale (21 points-8 rebounds) and Robert Parish (20 points-14 boards). The Celtics' final lead came at the 9:16 mark, 98-96, on back to back baskets by Parish and Jim Paxson. But Scott sparked a 14-4 run to seal the verdict.



By Johnny Most

The Celtics were playing better as they headed west for their annual February road trip. I think most people know I am the most loyal of Celtic observers. Yet, I confess that this team has baffled me this season. The team plays exceptionally well at times. In other instances, when I think we're ready to see the very best that the team can offer, we'll see an inconsistent performance. I want to believe that as the team travels through the west, in situations where few give them much chance to succeed, that they'll pick themselves up and play their most inspired ball this year.

As we closed out the first half of the season, the Celtics hosted the Sacramento Kings, and their outstanding guard, the former Celtic Danny Ainge. I respected and liked Dan very much. He knew that I was disappointed that the team was forced to trade him. Boston received two fine players in return, Joe Kleine and Ed Pinckney. Frontcourt depth was vital last season. Larry Bird had been out for the entire year up until that time, and we were under the impression (correct, it turned out), that we might not see Larry again for the entire year. And, if you recall, our two horses in the frontcourt, Robert Parish and Kevin McHale were feeling worn down during last season's western trip (when the trade was made). It was apparent that some kind of move was needed.

I felt badly that Danny was traded. His importance to the team started around the middle of the 1982-83 season. He started virtually the entire second half of that year, under Bill Fitch, and really started developing his confidence that season. So when some real hard times came during K.C. Jones's first year as coach, and there were some DNP's under K.C., Danny still had enough strength to regroup during the 1984 off-season. Ainge came back to the Pre-Season camp that 1984-85 year in outstanding shape. He won the starting guard spot opposite Dennis Johnson and the team was freed to trade Gerald Henderson, who had been so critical to the championship the year before. Danny Ainge played a vital role for the team in two championships, and the team is indebted to him for that. He has many friends here, including men like Red Auerbach, Jan Volk and Jimmy Rodgers. Professional sports is a sport, and it's a business. You are always plotting new strategies in order to help your team compete successfully down the line.

A critical building block for the Celtics, of course, is Larry Bird. I don't think there's much doubt that the Celtics need a truly representative performance from Larry to compete for league supremacy this season. His return has been such a boost; there

FROM HIGH ABOVE BOSTON GARDEN

Ainge and Bird

has been some frustration here in Boston because Larry's return hasn't meant an instant return to the top.

However, there's no doubt that the Celtics are a far better team than they were a year ago. Larry Bird is very likely the best all-around basketball player in history. How could a team do anything other than improve when a player of Bird's caliber is added? He makes everyone around him better, to repeat an observation frequently made about such great talents. He takes responsibility in close ballgames and he's a fearless, fierce, competitor.

I think Larry's still adjusting to the fact that he was away from the game for an entire year. I think that he's still feeling the effects of the layoff and quite possibly cannot jump as high on his outside shot as he once did. Timing in conjunction with the other new guys on the team has taken some time to get worked out. Knowing where players prefer to receive passes is something that just doesn't happen. It takes time and practice. Defensively, the team needs to make similar accommodations. When to switch. Who to switch against? Which teammate prefers to work through picks, or might possibly stay and try a double-team. Jimmy Rodgers has coached these changes, but it's time-consuming. The goal is to improve every game. I think that the Celtics are improving.

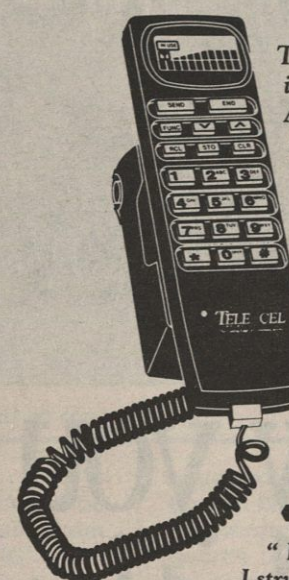
The team began the west coast trip with a win over the Rockets and I have to believe it's a good sign. There have been frustrations and an impatient feeling around the team this season. Larry, Kevin, Robert and Dennis Johnson, after all, have won three championships, and when things aren't going

well, there is bound to be dissatisfaction because there is so much pride. And I have to again go back to

Larry's importance. He is the critical factor in motivating his teammates to play hard, and to excel, every night. That's where the Most Valuable Player awards are won. He sometimes gives the impression that he's something of a "country guy." But he's one of the most intelligent people I know.

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Billy Cunningham

When it comes to NBA careers, nobody had a complete resumé than Billy Cunningham. Cunningham began his playing career in 1965 with the Philadelphia 76ers, and 11 years later he retired with a scoring average of 20.8 ppg.

After retiring, he coached the 76ers to a world championship in 1983, was a color commentator for CBS, and now he's one of the partners in the Miami Heat franchise. Having won NBA championships both as a coach and a player, now he's trying to build a contender from the ground up with the Heat. **CELTICS PRIDE** spoke with Billy Cunningham.

CELTICS PRIDE: For you, what was the most difficult aspect of starting a new NBA franchise?

Billy Cunningham: I think it was coming up with the philosophy for building the franchise. Ours was to go with younger players. We knew that meant we'd struggle early but we had to build a foundation.

We could have gotten some veteran players, but they would in their 30's, and with that we figured that once we were on the verge of becoming a decent team, we'd have to take a step backwards because those older players would either be retiring or unable to play at the level they were once capable of.

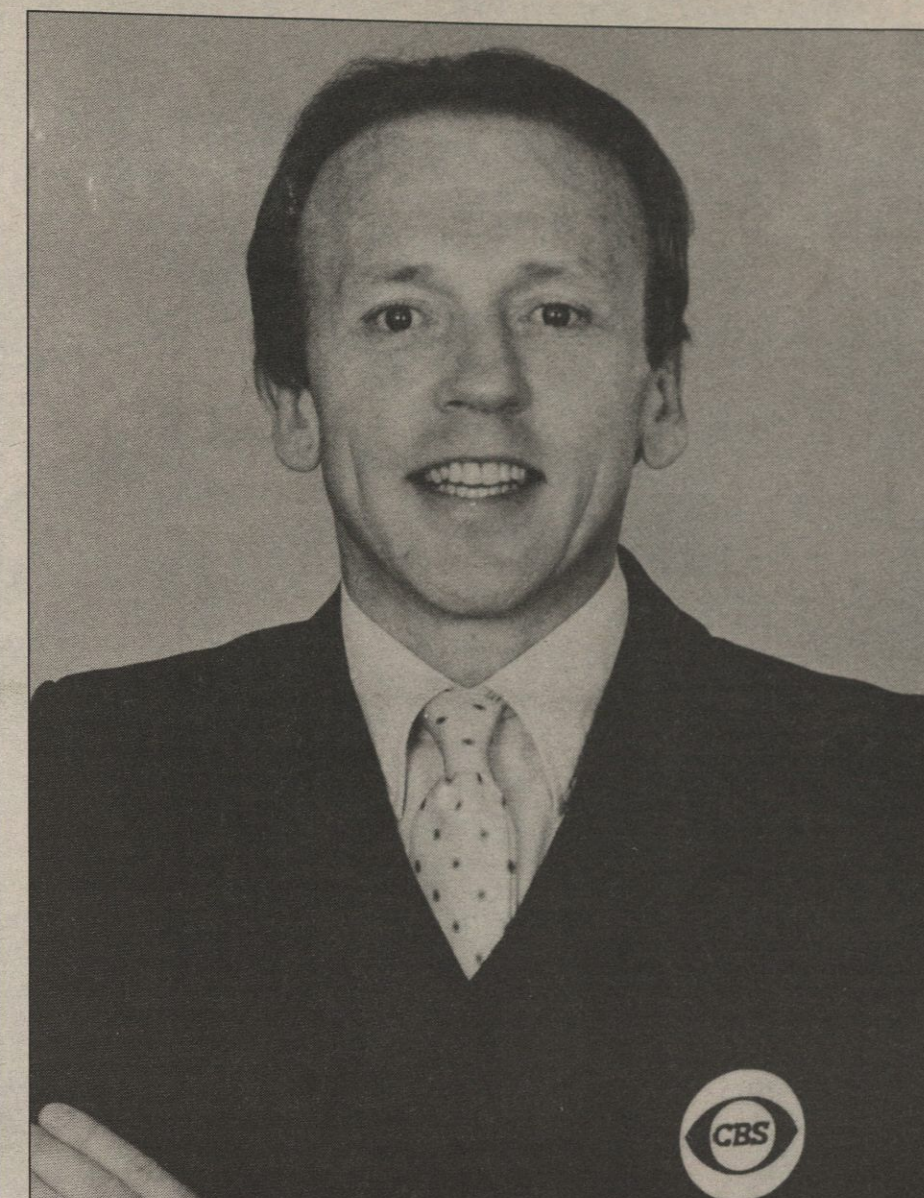
CELTICS PRIDE: When you entered your first draft last year and selected Rony Seikaly, was it because you wanted to draft a big man or were you simply selecting the best player available?

Billy Cunningham: Seikaly was the guy we wanted. We were hoping he would last into the ninth spot and he did. We knew he had never played organized basketball until he went to Syracuse, so we figured he'd get much better and develop into a good NBA player. I think he's showing that right now. Also, it's difficult finding big people, so I think we were very fortunate to have an opportunity to draft him.

CELTICS PRIDE: Looking at the other expansion team in 1988-89, Charlotte, it seemed to adopt the opposite philosophy you did, going with veterans like Kelly Tripucka and Kurt Rambis. At this point is there any way to tell which organization took the better route?

Billy Cunningham: I think to start out Charlotte's philosophy was to go with veterans, but now they're changing a little, trading Rambis for Armon Gilliam. They're getting a little younger. Only time will tell who's doing it the right way because there are so many factors that go into building a team—you have to be lucky that your draft picks work out and you also have to be lucky with injuries.

CELTICS PRIDE: It looks like there's a rivalry developing in Florida between you and Orlando. What do you



Billy Cunningham: Successful at many levels

think of it?

Billy Cunningham: I think it's all generated by a lot of talk from Orlando, particularly from (GM) Pat Williams. My belief and my experience is that rivalries are developed on the court, not by talk or geographical proximity. Look at some of the teams in the league—you don't have a real rivalry between the Knicks and the Nets, and there isn't one between New Jersey and Philadelphia. Yet there is one between Boston and Los Angeles.

Rivalries occur when two teams are pretty evenly matched and they're contesting for a playoff spot or something like that, like when I was coaching in Philadelphia and we had the rivalry with Boston.

Hopefully, down the road, there will be a rivalry between us and Orlando, but that will only come with performance on the court.

CELTICS PRIDE: How about the old rivalry between Philadelphia and Boston when you were playing?

Billy Cunningham: That was a great rivalry and I believe it did a lot to raise basketball to another plateau. I remember that sometimes it got a little out of hand, with people throwing

eggs and light bulbs on the court. One time in Philadelphia the Celtics had to be escorted off the court by security guards because the fans had gotten so out of hand. Then another time some dumb fan threw a beer can and hit a guy at the scorer's table in the head, splitting it wide open. There were some ugly situations like that back then, but it was an intense rivalry. For the most part the Celtics had the upper hand, but we managed to get them one year.

CELTICS PRIDE: How has the game changed since those days?

Billy Cunningham: When I played there were only eight or nine teams in the NBA and I think our per diem was nine dollars a day. So things have gotten a lot bigger.

But when people compare players from that era, or for that matter any era, to now, I think there were teams back then that would be top teams now and there are top teams now that would be top teams back then. So it hasn't changed that much, but now we just have a situation where there are more good players. There are 27 teams out there and every one of them has pretty good talent.

CELTICS PRIDE: You talked about the Chamberlain-Russell rivalry. Now centers don't seem to command the same attention as they used to. Has the position slipped over the years?

Billy Cunningham: If you look at recent history, all of the teams that won championships had somebody who was all-star. Maybe they weren't all-stars that particular year, but at some point they were playing at an all-star level.

Last year you had Bill Laimbeer, and before that Jabbar and Parish. I still think that when you get into the playoffs, the center is a very important position.

Also, there aren't that many center to go around and there a lot more teams than there used to be, so it appears that there aren't as many dominant centers. The other thing is, you have centers doing different things now than they used to. Look at Laimbeer—he's a great outside shooter.

CELTICS PRIDE: Now that the Heat is a year and a half into its lifetime, do you think it's possible for an expansion team to make the playoffs in its first year?

Billy Cunningham: It's a possibility. It depends on what happens in the dispersal draft—maybe you can find a couple of older players with something left who want to prove something to the teams that let them go. If you get lucky with the draft and make a trade or two, you have a chance. But it's a very slim chance.

CELTICS PRIDE: When you first sat down and thought about your philosophy in Miami, did you set a certain time frame where you wanted to have a playoff caliber team?

Billy Cunningham: Our main goal is to contend for a world championship. We don't want to be just a decent team. We know we're going to take our lumps for the first couple of years, but we think that if we can get lucky in the draft and make a trade or two, we can build a nice franchise.

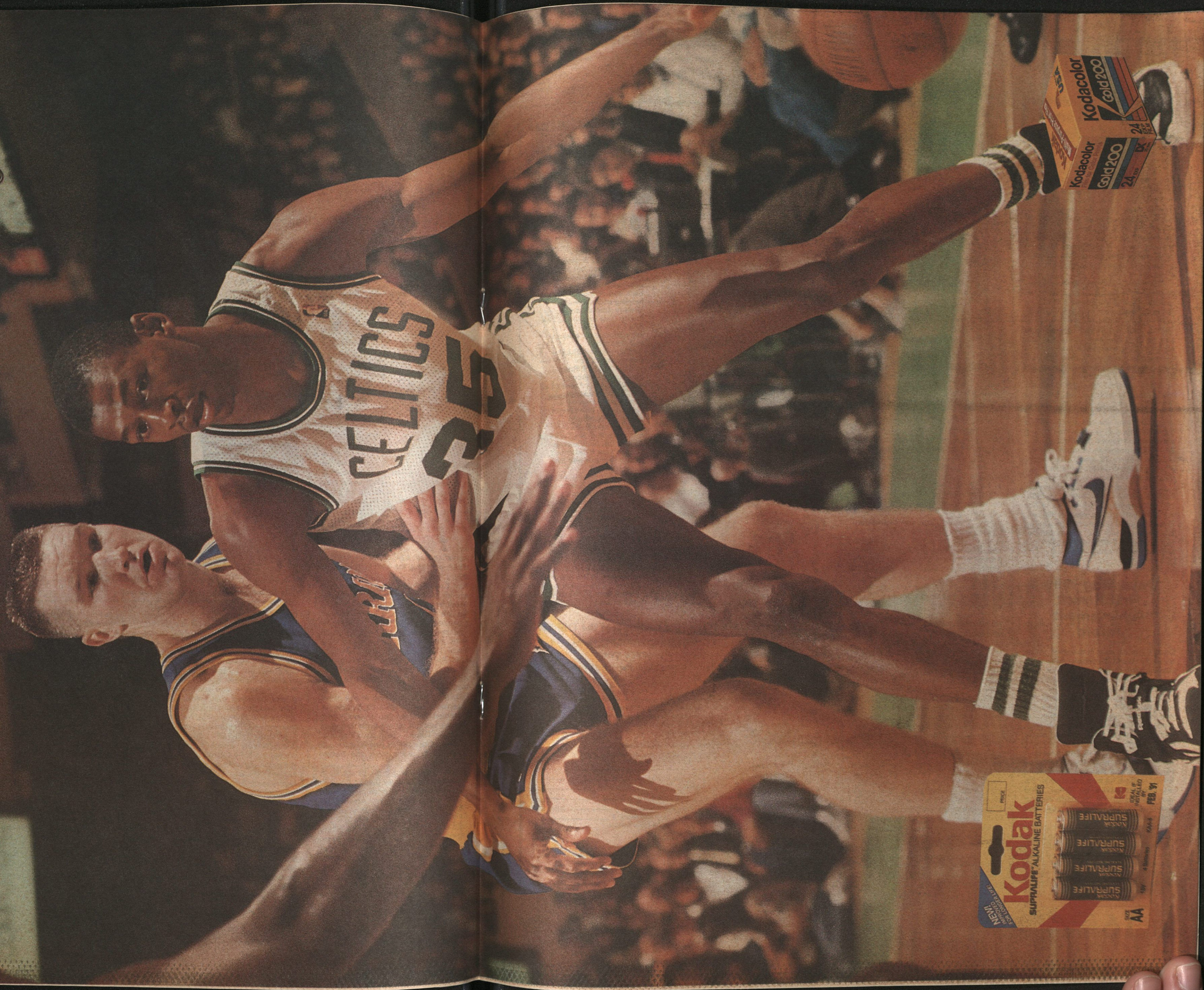
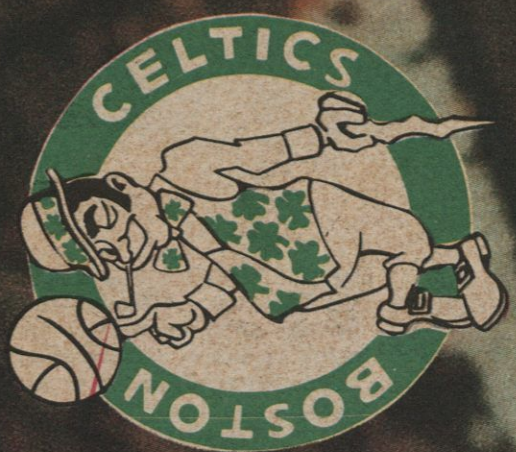
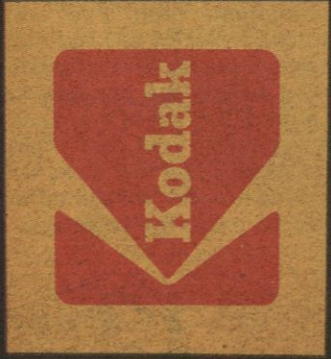
As far as time frame is concerned, we'd hate to lock ourselves into one because there are only so many controls that you have over the situation—the rest is left to chance. When you draft you get people who you hope will be good players, but sometimes they don't work out. And you never know what will happen injury-wise. Sometimes teams come together quickly, but other times it takes a long time. You just hope that you'll get lucky.

CELTICS PRIDE: Out of all the things you've done—playing, coaching, announcing, and being in the front office, which did you enjoy the most?

Billy Cunningham: Yeah, I've done everything but write. I'd say the most fun was being a player—no question about it. But I think the position I'm in now is a lot of fun. All of them have been very enjoyable and challenging in different ways. I just feel lucky that I've been able to stay in something that I enjoy so much for so long.

MARCH 16, 1990

13



Celtic's Sign Shaw Rejoins Team for 1990-91 Season

The Boston Celtics announced today that they have reached agreement for a multi-year contract with veteran free agent guard Brian Shaw commencing with the 1990-91 NBA season.

Shaw, the Celtics #1 pick in the 1988 college draft from the University of Santa Barbara, played for the Celtics during the 1988-89 season, averaging 8.6 points per game. He is currently playing for Il Messaggero Roma in Italy, and will continue through the end of the current season with that team.

"Playing in Italy this past year has been an interesting and educational experience, but playing in the NBA is the dream of every basketball player. I am looking forward to rejoining my Celtics teammates and playing with and against the best players in the world. It's a great relief for me to have my contract and my future clarified, and I'm anxious to be back playing in Boston," said Shaw today from Italy. Celtics General Manager Jan Volk expressed satisfaction at bringing Shaw back into the fold. "We believe that the signing of Brian Shaw is an important step for the future of the Boston Celtics. Brian is a fine young player who showed great potential in his rookie season and should help our team for years to come. I am very pleased that we have been able to get this matter resolved at this time."

Shaw, 24, played in all 82 regular season games for the Celtics in 1988-89, and averaged 17.0 points in the three playoff games against Detroit. The 6'6" guard is currently averaging 25.1 points and 9.4 rebounds per game to lead Il Messaggero Roma in both statistical categories.

Dave Bing Wins First Schick Achievement Award

Dave Bing, a leader in the steel industry and in the Detroit community since leaving pro basketball in 1978, was named the recipient of the first Schick Achievement Award.

Bing averaged 20.3 ppg over his nine year NBA career. He concluded this outstanding career, which included an NBA scoring championship, with the Celtics. He was an effective point guard for the team in 1977-78, averaging 13.6 ppg in 80 contests. It was a particularly satisfying weekend for Bing at the All-Star Weekend in Miami. Before he was honored for his meritorious service by Schick, Bing was named to the Naismith Hall of Fame along with Earl Monroe, Neil Johnston, and Elvin Hayes.

The honor roll for Bing after basketball is replete with outstanding feats. He founded Bing Steel and built this into the largest minority-owned steel service center in the nation. He is also president of two firms, Superb Manufacturing and Heritage 21 Foundation. Bing was honored by the U.S. Commerce

Department as the National Minority Supplier of the Year and was given the award at the White House by President Ronald Reagan in 1985, when he was honored as the National Minority Small Business Person of the Year. In addition, Bing has been actively involved with the Public School League (Celtics Pride 1989) in Detroit, where he collaborated with Isiah Thomas and others to raise funds to help keep athletics functioning in the city.

Schick donated 10,000 to the Southeast Youth Development Center in Washington D.C. on behalf of Bing.

KODAK PHOTO TIP

By Steve Lipofsky

Let's talk about what to do with all of those photographs you've got sitting around in boxes, albums and drawers.

Photographs make great gifts. There are few people who wouldn't prefer a framed photograph of themselves, their loved ones or another meaningful subject over a toaster oven or a electric drill. You've probably got a picture that you know a friend or relative would love to have.

If you don't have your own dark-room, find a photo lab you trust (ask to see examples of their work) and set about having enlargements made of your slides or negatives. When in doubt, have the photo store send directly to Kodak for your prints. I tend to prefer 11x14 matte (non-glossy) prints because they're large enough to be viewed easily in a room.

You'll want to frame this picture somehow (remember you're competing with a toaster oven). There are many inexpensive preassembled frames with "window" mats included. A mat will not only enhance the appearance of the photo, but will also protect it from direct contact with the glass, where moisture can cause it to stick. If you're unsure of what type of frame to get, go with a silver "Nelson" type frame; it will pretty much go with anything.

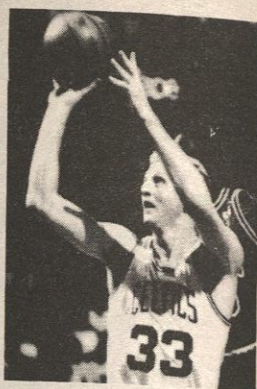
For more money, you can have a frame shop custom-frame your photo, or better yet, see if there's a do-it-yourself frame shop in your area that will guide you through the process and provide you with workspace. The right mat color and frame can greatly enhance your work. Don't forget to sign and date the mat, preferably in pencil underneath the lower right-hand corner of the "window." This will give the recipient of your gift some consolation in the event of your untimely passing that at least the value of your picture will have gone up.

Poster prints make an impressive gift. These are large, inexpensive 12x18 or 20x30 prints that can be made from your slide or negative. Your photo dealer or lab will order them for you. Remember that with this high degree of enlargement, you'll want to use a good, sharp original.

Lastly, you may want to look into having photo greeting cards made. Your local dealer will show you how. They're much more personal than an ordinary card and a lot more interesting, too. You can use a shot of yourself, your family, or someone else's family... just to keep them guessing.

Get to know your favorite players on and off the parquet with this year's edition of the

BOSTON CELTICS 1989-1990 YEARBOOK



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This year's edition of the Celtics Official Yearbook is bound to become a keepsake for every fan of the Green and White, so take advantage of this special offer—as a special friend of the Celtics, you can reserve your copy of the Celtics fan's ultimate souvenir by ordering this year's edition before publication at the discount price of \$4.95—a savings of more than \$1.00 off the cover price!

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Paxson's Time Limited Recently

Staying mentally ready

As the Boston Celtics looked ahead to playing the Chicago Bulls in early March, the natural match up to attract attention is the contest between Chicago Bull's superstar Michael Jordan and the Boston Celtics' Larry Bird. For Jim Paxson however, the game with the Bulls means a friendly confrontation with his brother John. The two have met several times now; Jim has been in the NBA since the 1979-80 season and John Paxson, the 6'2" guard of the Chicago Bulls, was drafted by the San Antonio Spurs in 1983.

"We are used to going at it," explained Jim. "It's nothing new and it's really not much different than going against friends of yours who are friends on other teams. The reason for that is we are both very competitive. I think we've had to be. I'm not a very good one-on-one player, so I've depended on my ability to move without the ball for effectiveness. John's not a player of great size. But he's tough and he's made good use of the emphasis on the 3-point Field Goal of the Chicago Bulls. He spots up when Michael Jordan or Scottie Pippen drives and he's able to get open shots that way."

But the rivalry with his brother wasn't foremost on Jim Paxson's mind recently. Rather, his limited playing time was of concern. Since the middle of January, his playing time has been limited, partially because of the fine play of Kevin Gamble dating back to the team's late December trip west, partially due to a puzzling shooting slump. But Paxson wasn't complaining. It was challenging enough to maintain playing conditioning in this set of circumstances, and Paxson, after ten seasons in the league, understands the complexities of the situation.

"There's no point in getting upset about anything," commented Paxson. "I just have to keep practicing hard and try to show (Jimmy Rodgers) that my game is still intact."

"It is true that I haven't played a lot lately, but I'm going to stay ready. I want to be able to help the team any way I can. Winning is what's important here and that's the way I approach the game. It's why I was so happy to have been traded here in the first place."

Paxson was traded to the Boston Celtics before the deadline in February of 1988 in exchange for Jerry Sichting. Ironically, Sichting, who was here last week when the Celtics hosted the Charlotte Hornets, professed to be unhappy in his role with the second year expansion team. After Charlotte changed coaches from Dick Harter to Gene Littles, Sichting, who was playing well in the final days of Harter, was delegated to the bench as the new coach Littles experimented with different lineups.

It has been a difficult career as a

Celtic for Paxson. He's been injured in two of the seasons, a strained back limited his action in the 1988 playoffs, and last season, a torn ligament in his wrist forced him to miss the final month. This season, after starting 20 consecutive games from mid-December through mid-January, the rotation was altered as John Bagley returned from Injured Reserve. Rodgers has tried to fit an uptempo weapon into the Celtics' offensive arsenal for two

seasons; in the shuffle, Paxson's minutes were reduced.

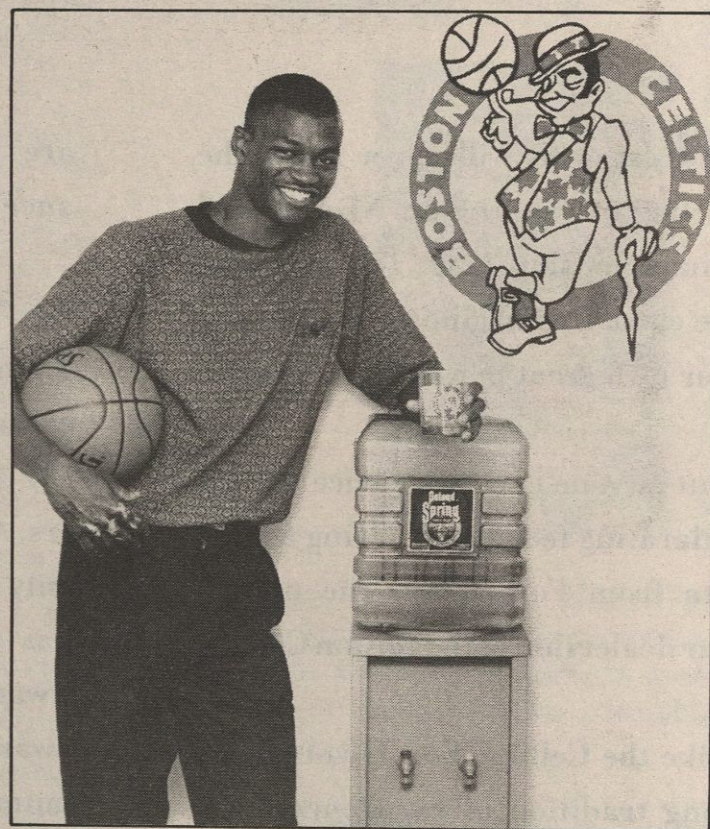
Recently though, Paxson returned to action and acquitted himself well. On the trip to the West Coast, Paxson had a pair of 13 minute stints in Portland and Los Angeles, and in both games, though still showing signs of the layoff, he contributed, scoring 4 points in Portland and 6 on 3-of-5 shooting against the Lakers.

"I played with veterans when I was

with the Trail Blazers," remembered Paxson. "Don Buse was a close friend. We'd talk about roles and how successful teams won. I think that has remained with me."

"Besides, it's a long season, one with ups and downs. I believe I'll have an opportunity to contribute. Staying mentally ready is all important because you want to be building yourself up mentally and physically when the playoffs come around."

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Preferred by the Boston Celtics

Kevin Gamble Interview

Going with the flow

Kevin Gamble's career as a Boston Celtic seemed to be nothing more than a quick drive through the Country on a Sunday afternoon for most of last season. Signed as a free agent out of the CBA in December of 1988, Gamble sat on the Celtics bench for most of last year; but another injury in a season of ills descended on the C's. With Dennis Johnson's sprained ankle in April, Gamble suddenly had an opportunity. As most know, he starred unexpectedly: In six starts he scored at a 21.3 ppg clip, utilizing a slashing, fearless offensive attack. On defense, though inexperienced, he is willing, and apparently successful. In head to head matchups with players such as Ron Harper of the Clippers and Dale Ellis of Seattle, Gamble has acquitted himself well. Gamble's steady play has continued this season, though with the return to health of Johnson and Larry Bird, he's been in and out of the rotation. He was asked about this, and other matters, in this issue's interview.

CELTICS PRIDE: There have been periods of time when you've had long minutes, and at other situations, DNP's. How does this affect you?

Gamble: You have to learn to accept it. You go with the flow.

CELTICS PRIDE: How do you stay ready, if the minutes you play are inconsistent?

Gamble: Last season when I came here, I didn't realize the value of practice the same way I do now. I work extremely hard in practice now. The whole point is that basketball is your profession, and quality practice time is part of doing the job well. Coaches see that you're playing well in practice and they'll give you a call during games.

CELTICS PRIDE: What is the feeling like when you're out there finishing up games that have long been since decided? In other words, playing in "garbage time?"

Gamble: Again, part of the job. But I won't say that I like it. I take pride in my game and I'm a professional. I want to be out there getting quality playing time.

CELTICS PRIDE: Who has been an influence on you here?

Gamble: Dennis Johnson has helped me a lot. We're always talking — on the bench, off the floor. There's a number of things you have to be aware of in basketball.

CELTICS PRIDE: Undoubtedly, this coaching, of a sort, came in handy when you played point guard during Bagley's time on the IR.

Gamble: No doubt. I'm not going to argue at all that playing the point is my natural position. Not at all. But I'll go out there and do the job if I have to. Dennis's technique is something I've watched from the day I've been here. He is outstanding at protecting



Kevin thinks the C's playoff chances are good

the ball when he's bringing the ball up the floor. We're about the same size, so I've done that, too. Plus, I'm always looking over at the bench when I'm handling the ball a lot. That's helped me. I can pick up Jimmy's calls very well that way.

CELTICS PRIDE: Last summer, you signed a contract with the Celtics after that last outstanding stretch of time you played. Was there a consid-

eration of going elsewhere?

Gamble: My agent and I are satisfied with the decision we made. Other than saying that, I have no comment about it.

CELTICS PRIDE: The team has been critical this season for its inconsistency. What about it?

Gamble: With some justification, probably. But we're a definite contender, in my opinion. Larry's getting better and better, Kevin McHale is playing very well, and Robert Parish is probably the best center in basketball. We have to get better because the league is so balanced. That's always the challenge. But we won our first two road games on the west coast road trip, and I look for good

things from us. We've beaten Detroit, New York, the major challengers in our Conference. In a playoff series, we'd have as good a chance as anybody.

CELTICS PRIDE: Other than that stretch when it seemed Jimmy was adjusting the rotation to accommodate both Johnson and Bagley, you have received regular minutes.

Gamble: It makes all the difference in

the world to know you'll get minutes, that you'll be in there for awhile. I'm automatically more relaxed. You're not looking over your shoulder to see if you're coming out of a game.

CELTICS PRIDE: How have you enjoyed Boston?

Gamble: I'm from the Chicago area, so I have a familiarity with cities. I enjoy Boston; I enjoy going out from time to time, and for a young guy here, there are good restaurants and cultural activities to go to.

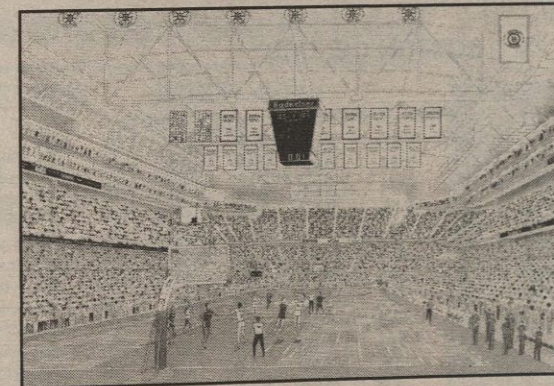
CELTICS PRIDE: Who are the players that you watch in the league, to learn from?

Gamble: I'm like everybody else, I guess. Michael Jordan is outstanding, the way he takes the ball to the basket and gets his shot. And since I've played more guard in the NBA, I really appreciate Magic Johnson's game. He's very tall, but he breaks defenses down as if he were a small penetrating guard.

CELTICS PRIDE: If you were to describe your style and what you can contribute to the Celtics, how would you do it?

Gamble: Well, I watch the guards, and I'd have to say my strength is that I'm a slasher, a driver, a player who will take it in. We've had some difficulties getting to the line during the first half of the season. and I think that here I can make a contribution. Teams are always doubling down on Kevin and Robert. I think we took advantage of this very well during our road trip because we were moving the ball so well around the perimeter. Another way of forcing defenders away from our big people is driving. Then there's two areas they have to fear. But I believe in myself as a total player. I can nail the open shot from the perimeter if that's what the defense gives us.

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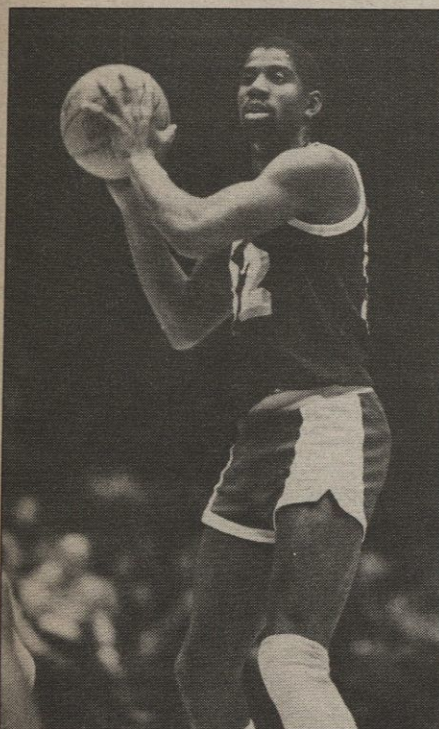
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NBA N

OTEBOOK

Earvin Magic Johnson won his initial All-Star Game Most Valuable Player award despite the West's 130-113 setback at the East-West game in Miami, February 11th. "I'm just very honored by this," commented Magic. "I think the game is important because for one game, we (the NBA players) can be both competitive and place an emphasis on having fun. I want to thank the city of Miami for staging a wonderful show and hope that the kids here had an opportunity to see their heroes play."

Rick Barry, former player and Hall of Famer, as well as TNT color analyst, on Magic: "I think Magic wanted to prove something, and he's always had great determination as a professional. He's particularly great in an all-star game. He not only makes his team special, he makes the whole game special. He's always been responsible for making other players MVP, for example, **Tom Chambers** in 1987,"



Magic Johnson: All-star MVP

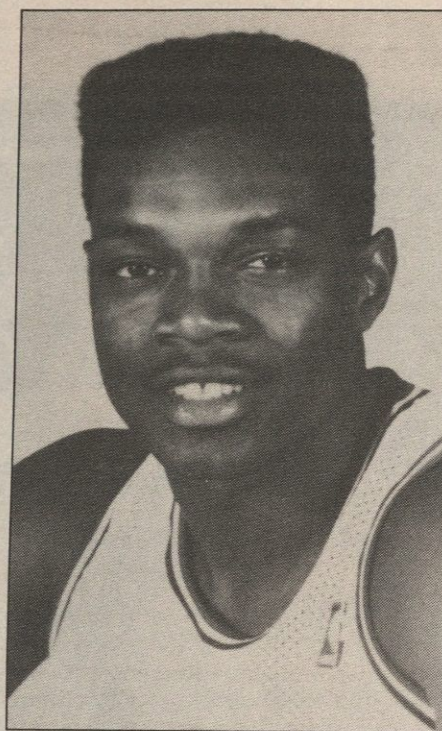
(something Chambers agreed with, two days before the 1990 event) ... "I would have loved to have played with Magic."

Dominique Wilkins of the Atlanta Hawks and **Craig Hodges** of the Chicago Bulls were winners of the Slam-Dunk contest and 3-Point Field Goal shooting affair, respectively. It was the first 3-Point FG contest **Larry Bird** participated in that he failed to win. ... Wilkins on his possibly defending his title next year: "I don't know about that," commented Nique. "I'm starting to get a little old for this." ... Wilkins and Hodges each won \$20,000 for their victories.

Director of NBA Scouting **Marty Blake** on the phlegmatic **Derrick Chievous**, a 1st round draft choice in 1988 by the Rockets but thus far an underachiever: "I think Chievous can play. He has the talent, to my mind both as a 2 or 3 (i.e., off guard or small forward). I think that if the Rockets chose to trade him, I know there's a lot of interest in him around the league ... Blake on Olympian and European standout, **Oskar Schmidt** of South America: "very talented, but I think he shoots far too much." ... Blake, further, on the rumors that **Akeem Olajuwon** might be traded: "No chance."

Bob Weinbauer, the Director of Player Personnel and Chief Scout of the Philadelphia 76ers on the difficulties of scouting: "It's relatively easy to scout the top prospects. The hardest players to pinpoint are the ones who fall roughly between the 12th and 23rd picks. Are they skilled enough? Motivated to improve? Intelligent enough to handle all of the complexities of the league?" ... Weinbauer cited the Sixers' **Derek Smith**, out for eighteen months earlier in his career with reconstructive knee surgery but now a valuable contributor to Philadelphia, as an example of a player with a "totally professional work ethic."

Trade rumors continued to swirl around Dallas's **Sam Perkins**, although the six year veteran insists he very well may sign with the Mavericks after the season is over ... Perkins will be an unrestricted free agent at the



Sam Perkins: New team next year?

end of the season, which has led to speculation he may be dealt. However, with the return of **Roy Tarpley** from his suspension, the Mavericks won 9 of 11 and this has temporarily laid to rest latent dissension ... Rumors were that the Knicks were offering either **Mark Jackson** or **Rod Strickland** and **Johnny Newman** (struggling) to Dallas for Sam, who reportedly would command as much as \$2.5 to possibly 3 million in the FA market, more than Dallas has ever paid anyone ... According to Dallas play-by-play announcer **Ted Davis**: "I think the rumor is just that: a rumor. The players were unhappy under (former coach) **John MacLeod**, but Sam likes playing under **Richie Adubatos**. Also: Sam's agent, **Lee Fentress** and Dallas management are getting along better. They weren't when Sam signed his one year deal in October." ... Dallas's thinking in desiring either Jackson or Strickland: Give their fine point guard **Derek Harper** more time at the two guard in a three guard rotation.

NBA Director of Scouting **Marty Blake** sees LaSalle's **Lionel Simmons** as the top small forward in the draft ... Blake's choices for numbers 1 and 2 at center: **Derrick Coleman** of Syracuse and **Alec Kessler** of Georgia.

Tom Chambers of the Phoenix Suns set a team record when he scored 56 against the Warriors in Oakland last week ... The streaking Suns, who defeated Golden State in the playoffs last season, thus defeated the Warriors in back-to-back games during President's Day Weekend.

Tom Heinsohn on **Otis Thorpe** of the Rockets: "A player with definite superstar potential. The Rockets are trying to groom him into being a **Karl Malone** type. He has that type of athletic ability and comparable size."

Nets' coach **Bill Fitch** and his guard **Lester Connor** had a confrontation on the Nets' bench during the Nets' 11th straight loss in Philadelphia on Valentine's Day ... It came during the Sixers' 49 point 3rd quarter, extraordinary in this defense season ... "I had to say what I had to say," explained Fitch later. "The team was being beaten badly, and if the whole world had to see (my dissatisfaction), then so be it." ... The two men met the following day to clear the air.

Pistons' assistant coach **Brendon Suhr** thinks the Chicago Bulls are a definite playoff title threat. "Because of their schedule and because of, obviously, their talent. Of all the Eastern contenders, the Bulls have the most home games remaining." ... The Bulls, though, needed them, after suffering through a 1-5 trip surrounding the All-Star break ... **Johnny Kerr**, Bull's announcer, on the Bulls' slump at that time: "The Bulls were soft defensively the entire trip. **Bill Cartwright's** tendonitis in the knees has to be a concern because the Bulls were beaten badly on their defensive board the entire trip."

Reports had Spurs' coach **Larry Brown** openly critical of their 1st round draft choice, **Sean Elliot** ... Brown thought his young Spurs needed the four day All-Star break because "they were beginning to look very fatigued to me."

as of 2/19/90

BOSTON CELTICS

WON 30, LOST 20

PLAYER	G GS MIN			-FIELD GOALS-			3-PT. FG			-FREE THROWS-			--REBOUNDS--											
	G	GS	MIN	FG	FGA	PCT	FG	FGA	PCT	FT	FTA	PCT	OFF	DEF	TOT	AST	PF	DQ	STL	TO	BLK	PTS	AVG	HIG
BIRD	46	46	1740	415	913	.455	30	104	.288	181	191	.948	57	360	417	349	107	1	67	155	38	1041	22.6	50
MCHALE	50	2	1548	361	665	.543	9	21	.429	232	251	.924	116	272	388	92	153	1	14	115	81	963	19.3	34
PARISH	50	50	1568	341	576	.592	0	0		154	216	.713	185	337	522	68	123	1	29	120	42	836	16.7	38
LEWIS	48	23	1438	307	636	.483	3	10	.300	141	174	.810	58	134	192	114	132	2	46	76	33	758	15.8	32
JOHNSON	46	36	1246	126	300	.420	0	14	.000	66	84	.786	25	103	128	285	112	1	49	76	6	318	6.9	24
GAMBLE	49	9	794	110	238	.462	3	15	.200	38	56	.679	38	56	94	97	58	1	23	33	7	290	5.9	18
PINCKNEY	50	48	879	110	202	.545	0	1	.000	70	91	.769	74	106	180	54	99	1	26	47	31	290	5.8	15
PAXSON	43	22	783	106	244	.434	1	7	.143	30	38	.789	14	33	47	98	66	0	20	26	2	243	5.7	16
KLEINE	50	0	817	116	231	.502	0	1	.000	45	57	.789	75	153	228	28	98	0	9	46	13	277	5.5	16
BAGLEY	27	14	604	61	125	.488	1	10	.100	12	16	.750	8	28	36	158	41	0	17	61	0	135	5.0	14
M. SMITH	35	0	222	48	102	.471	0	9	.000	15	19	.789	12	22	34	34	26	0	3	22	0	111	3.2	16
C. SMITH	35	0	255	32	78	.410	0	5	.000	28	39	.718	4	26	30	50	36	0	20	15	3	92	2.6	11
CELTICS	50		12025	2145	4349	.493	49	202	.243	1045	1266	.825	669	1640	2309	1455	1070	8	325	814	257	5384	107.7	146
OPPONENTS	50		12025	2031	4424	.459	99	309	.291	1025	1333	.769	620	1395	2015	1235	1110	9	476	629	241	5186	103.7	125

CELTICS PRIDE

BY THE N

UMBERS

The Boston Celtics, among the league leaders in rebounding on the defensive boards, were faring well on their extended West Coast trip because of their ability to control the tempo of games. Other than when they met the Portland Trail Blazers, who broke open a close game in the fourth quarter, the Celtics essentially played the games at their pace during the first week. Boston outrebounded both the Houston Rockets and the San Antonio Spurs, and won both contests. Although the Trail Blazers controlled the boards and won, the Celtics, despite being outrebounded by the Lakers in Los Angeles and subsequently also losing, still were able to manage the pace of that contest, despite the absence of John Bagley (injured hamstring) and Dennis Johnson (injured quadriceps). Another stat which was notable during the week: Larry Bird's consecutive free throw streak ended at 71 games, seven less than Calvin Murphy's league record.

Larry Bird. Bird's statement game came in the first game of the trip: 38 points, 14 rebounds, 8 assists and 3 steals in the opener at the Summit, established the Celtics intensity on the trip. He averaged 24.8 ppg and 10.2 rebounds during the first phase of the trip. His free throw streak was the second longest in league annals. 1) Calvin Murphy-78, 2) Larry Bird-71, 3) Dan Issel-63, 4) Rick Barry-60, 5) Larry Bird-59.

Ed Pinckney. On the trip, virtually scoreless. Pinckney scored his first field goal at the 7:57 mark of the 1st

quarter in the Los Angeles game. Nevertheless, still filling a role. McHale, having his best season since 1986, has remarked repeatedly his decreased minutes load is factor. Averaged 11.5 minutes on the trip in first week, blocked three shots and had five rebounds.

Robert Parish. Averaged 12.5 ppg and 10.8 rebounds against first four foes. Plagued by injured elbow in first game against bruising Olajuwon, and the fast breaking attack of the Portland Trail Blazers neutralized his effects. Forced issue against the Los Angeles Lakers in best stats effort (20 points, 14 rebounds) as Riley went to Thompson-Divac tandem for effective defense against Parish. Won second battle with San Antonio's Robinson, though outscored. Had 16 points-13 rebounds, 3 steals and 2 blocks.

Dennis Johnson. Thought to be out a month with injury, DJ was back and effective from the beginning of trip, though playing sparingly. In 11 minutes, 4 points, 2 rebounds and 2 assists against Rockets, but negligible minutes in SA, with only 8. Started against Portland and the Lakers: 8 points, 3 assists and steal at Portland, and in best effort, 10 points-12 assists in Los Angeles.

Reggie Lewis. Lewis continued to play an important role, a force offensively at the two with speed and jumping ability at 6'7", and improving defensively. Averaged 21.8 ppg in four games and had a career high 9 assists in LA. His 15 points down stretch in Houston (25 points-4 assists-2 steals) were vital to that win. Best line in

Lakers game: 10-13 FG's, 4-4 FT's, 9 assists, 2 assts, 1 block for 24.

Kevin McHale. Starred in first leg, dominating Spur's down stretch (28 points-11 rebounds, 2 blocks) and averaging 26.8 ppg and 7.8 rebounds. Held team together in Portland with a season high 34 points (14-14 FT's and 2 Three-point FG's), 8 rebounds, 4 blocks. Averaged 36.5 minutes on trip, 33-60 FG's for 55% FG%. Wide range in latter stat: was 12-15 against Spurs from floor following 4-15 effort in Houston.

John Bagley. Resumed starting in Houston because of Johnson injury, but then, after two effective outings, was injured in Portland. Ran team on the road the most effectively he has as Celtic in Houston and San Antonio. In Houston, 37 minutes, 5-12 FG's, 7 assists, 6 rebounds, 2 steals, 10 points. Against Spurs, 34 minutes, 2 points, 6 assists and presence down stretch. DNP in LA after strong 16 minutes in PRT: 6 assists in 16 minutes.

Joe Kleine. Kleine injured knee in Houston, joining Parish in infirmary after taking on Olajuwon. Nevertheless, came back to play critical role in that game: 14 minutes 4-7 FG's for 8 points, 4 rebounds and steal. In 18 minutes vs. Blazers, 5 points, 4 rebounds. Averaged 12.5 minutes on trip, compared to 16.3 over season.

Kevin Gamble. Had limited minutes on the start of trip, averaging 6.8 minutes per contest. Best moments were in San Antonio and Los Angeles. In former, joined M. Smith, C. Smith, Parish and McHale to rally C's during

19-0 first half spurt. (1-3 FG's, 1 steal). In LA, had 3-point FG at 3rd quarter horn to restore Celtic lead at 94-92, a shot delivered from halfcourt. Paxson played in Gamble's usual spot in rotation.

Jim Paxson. After pair of DNPs-Coach's Decision (7 of these for season), Paxson returned to action in Portland, where he had been an All-Star. Displayed obvious signs of this inactivity but contributed: 13 minutes in PRT, with 4 points, 1-3 FG's, 2-2 FT's, 2 rebounds. Then in LA, 13 minutes, 3-5 FG's, 6 points, 3 assists, 1 steal. His .425 FG% has apparently been a factor in his inactivity.

Michael Smith. Smith has beginnings of career finally. His career bests were against the Sacramento Kings before the All-Star break when he had 16 points-8 assists in 24 minutes against visiting Kings. After 2 minute scoreless stint in Houston, played perhaps his most important role to date in San Antonio: in 10 minutes, 11 points (3-5 FG's, 5-5 FT's)-2 rebounds, 1 steal in critical 2nd quarter rally. Followed this with 7 points in 11 minutes in PRT, 3-7 FG's, 1-1 FT's, 1 rebound and 1 assist.

Charles Smith. Like Michael Smith, played an indispensable role in C's win in San Antonio. With team trailing Spurs by 17, he directed fast breaking attack and keyed a sudden 56-45 halftime lead. Stats belie: 6 minutes, scoreless, but 3 assists, and steals. Smith lacks size perhaps, but is always aggressive and thinks he can play in the NBA, regardless of when he does play.

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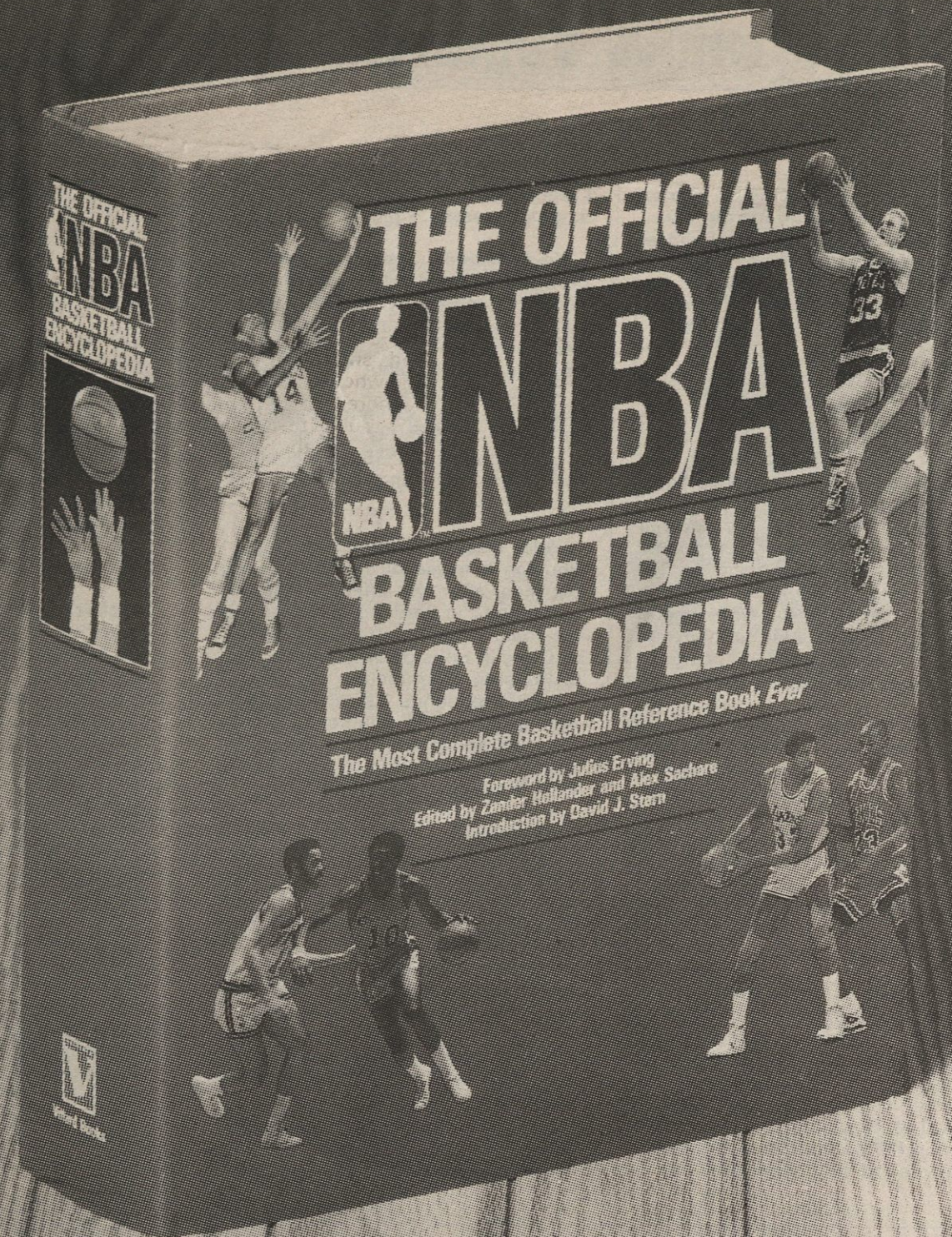
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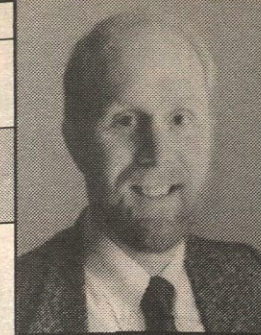


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By Glenn Rifkin

THE FAN'S EYEVUEW

What Rights Do The Fans Have?

You may or may not have seen the item in the *Boston Globe* in early February. It was a sidebar to the main game story. The Celtics had demolished the Charlotte Hornets the night before and this sidebar described a bizarre scenario during a third quarter timeout. With the Celts ahead by 30, a fan stood not far from the Celtics bench and screamed bloody murder at them. He was angry about the Milwaukee game in Hartford the night before in which the Celts lost badly to a Bucks team they should have beaten. "Where were you last night?" he screamed. "Where were you when it meant something?"

According to the *Globe*, several Celtics stared angrily at the fan and Dennis Johnson went so far as to offer the fan his money back if he would leave. It was an ugly moment at the shrine. After a decade of blissful love and admiration, Boston Garden has heard the unfamiliar and very unpleasant sound of angry boos being hurled at this year's team. The fans are frustrated in ways that are perhaps unique to the franchise.

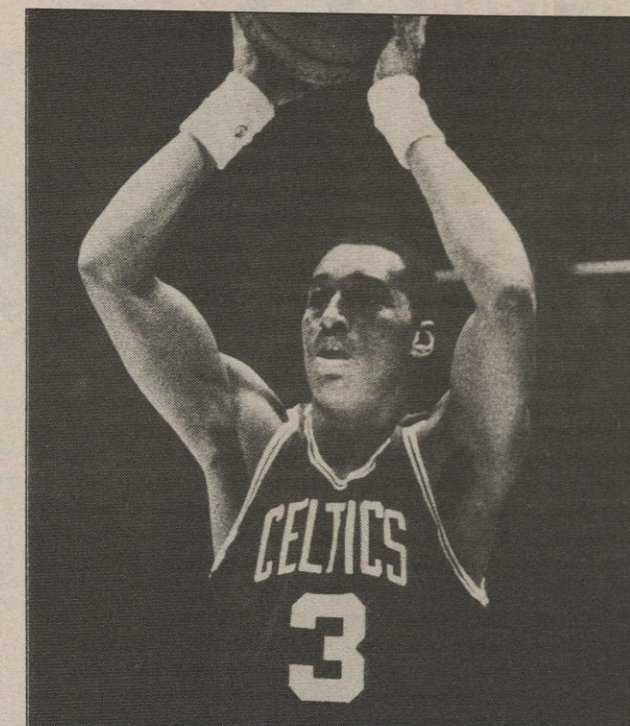
Because this year's edition, unlike the occasional tough years like 77-78, was supposed to be a contender. This year's Celtics had Bird back, a tremendously improved bench, and all the opportunity in the world to regain top tier status in the NBA.

Instead, the team has been consistently inconsistent; frustrating and confounding. They beat the tough Knicks and then lose a critical road game to the lowly expansion Timberwolves. They go 3-0 on a West Coast trip and lose to pathetic Golden State at home. They give the fans enough spit and shine to get everyone excited and then go out and play like a bad dream.

So there is frustration, with a capital F. There is frustration in the locker room, frustration in the media, and much frustration at the coffee machines in every Boston-area office. The fans are irritable, tired of nasty phone calls from relatives and friends in LA and Detroit and everywhere telling them that their beloved Celtics are old and tired and fading fast.

And all that brings up a fascinating question: what rights do the fans have in all this? What does the team, the franchise, the individual players, owe to the little folks with the big lungs?

The answer to that is complicated in my opinion. There are obvious facets to this. For one thing, the fans pay the way ultimately. Without ticket sales, television contracts, sales of paraphernalia, concessions, etc. etc., there is an empty hole to fill. Sports is a multi-billion dollar business because there is an insatiable appetite on the part of the public for it. If all



Dennis Johnson offered a fan his money back

at once, a mysterious alien cloud drifted over the planet and caused everyone to simultaneously turn off to sports, the whole infrastructure would collapse.

So one can argue that individual teams and players owe quite a lot to their fans. Without fans, Magic Johnson is living in Detroit in a three-bedroom ranch playing pickup hoop at the Y instead of relaxing in his Bel Air estate contemplating his stock

portfolio.

And show me the player who isn't thrilled to be more recognizable and popular than the President of the U.S., and I'll turn in my Cons hightops. It is the fans who have made these guys heroes, rightly or wrongly. It is the fans who have created the space for athletes to move to a higher plane in our society.

Does that give the fans the right to get angry? Does that give them the right to get nasty at home game? Does that give Celtics fans the right to loudly berate the team in the Boston Garden?

Clearly, the players don't think so. The players believe that a fan should not be fickle, should stay loyal in good times and bad

times. As long as he is giving 100%, the fan should give support if not downright enthusiasm. Players either get angry and use the media to put the fans in their place, or get stoic and announce that they are above such fickle adulation. They play for themselves and the team, they insist.

But the players may, in fact, be the worst people to ask about this. As pros, they no longer understand the love affair that develops between a fan

and his team. To the athlete, pro sport quickly becomes a business deal. It is lucrative, no doubt. But it is pressure-packed, perilous and unforgiving. They tend to get cynical about peripheral issues, such as fans.

The fan, however, is in this for some inexplicable yet dramatically real emotional reason. Bonds get formed early, usually as an impressionable child, and can often run across a lifetime. How many disappointed but undaunted 75-year old Red Sox fans are out there in the hinterlands, waiting desperately for a World Series championship that remains as elusive as a cloud?

Celtics fans are a special breed. They know basketball. They know success. Expectations are extremely high in Boston and the idea of a decline in the fortunes of this franchise is simply unacceptable. I believe that most of the sophisticated fans understand that championships can't be expected year in and year out. What everyone is having trouble digesting this season is that they see the same championship heroes out there on the parquet and they can't settle down with the inconsistency. It is a harder pill to swallow than outright losing. You get used to losing. You can't get used to the unpredictable.

I also believe that true fans, the one who love the Celtics under the most trying circumstances, know deep down that this team is not performing this way just to drive them crazy. They realize that at the NBA level, giving 100% isn't enough. There is something called synergy. And that is missing right now from this team. Synergy is out there. You can sense it, even see it on some nights. There is every reason to believe it will return regularly before the season ends. But it may not.

Whether it does or not, the fans have to stick with this team. Screaming at the players during timeouts is low class. In an uphill struggle, the climb gets easier with a sincere push from someone who loves you. The fans who understand that will enjoy this season a whole lot more.

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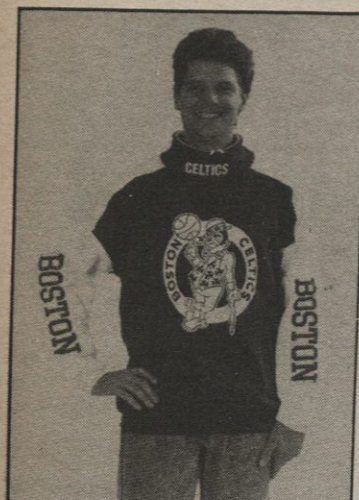
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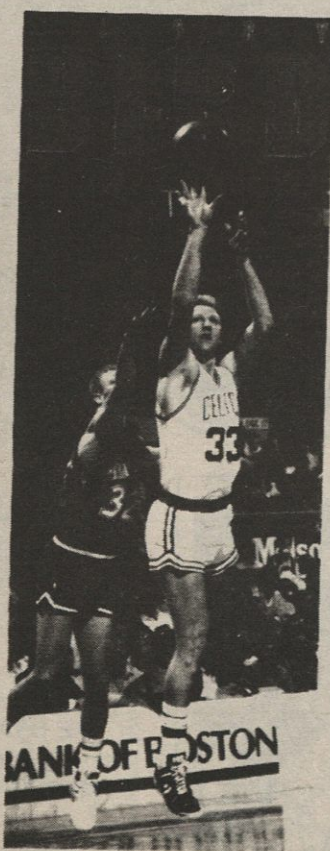
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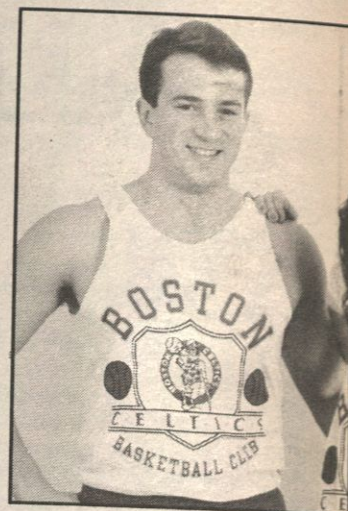
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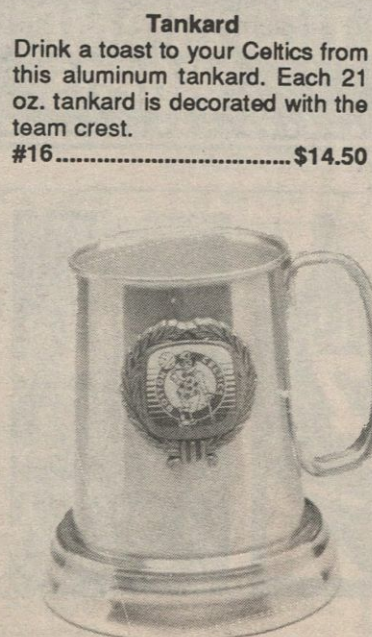
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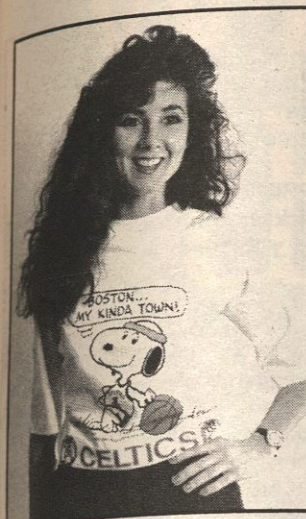
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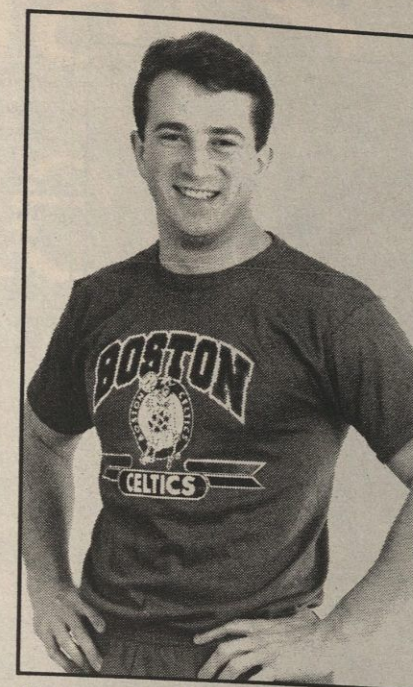
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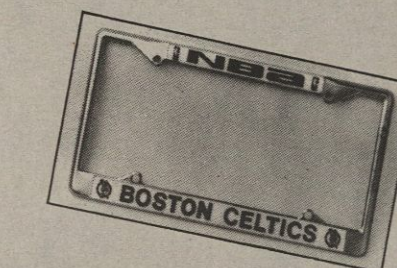
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Color commentator looks at roundball

No network televised sport has three more celebrated, recognizable and often criticized color commentators than college basketball, with ABC and ESPN's Dick Vitale, NBC's Al McGuire and CBS's Billy Packer.

The three have each other to thank for their rise to celebrity. Each has a distinct style and personality that leaves fertile ground for fan loyalty.

Vitale is, well, Vitale. You either love him or hate him. He's gregarious, or a loud mouth. Energetic, or obnoxious. Knowledgeable, or a blowhard.

Vitale's antithesis, McGuire, takes a more understated approach, with a low key delivery backed up by years of college coaching experience and a national championship.

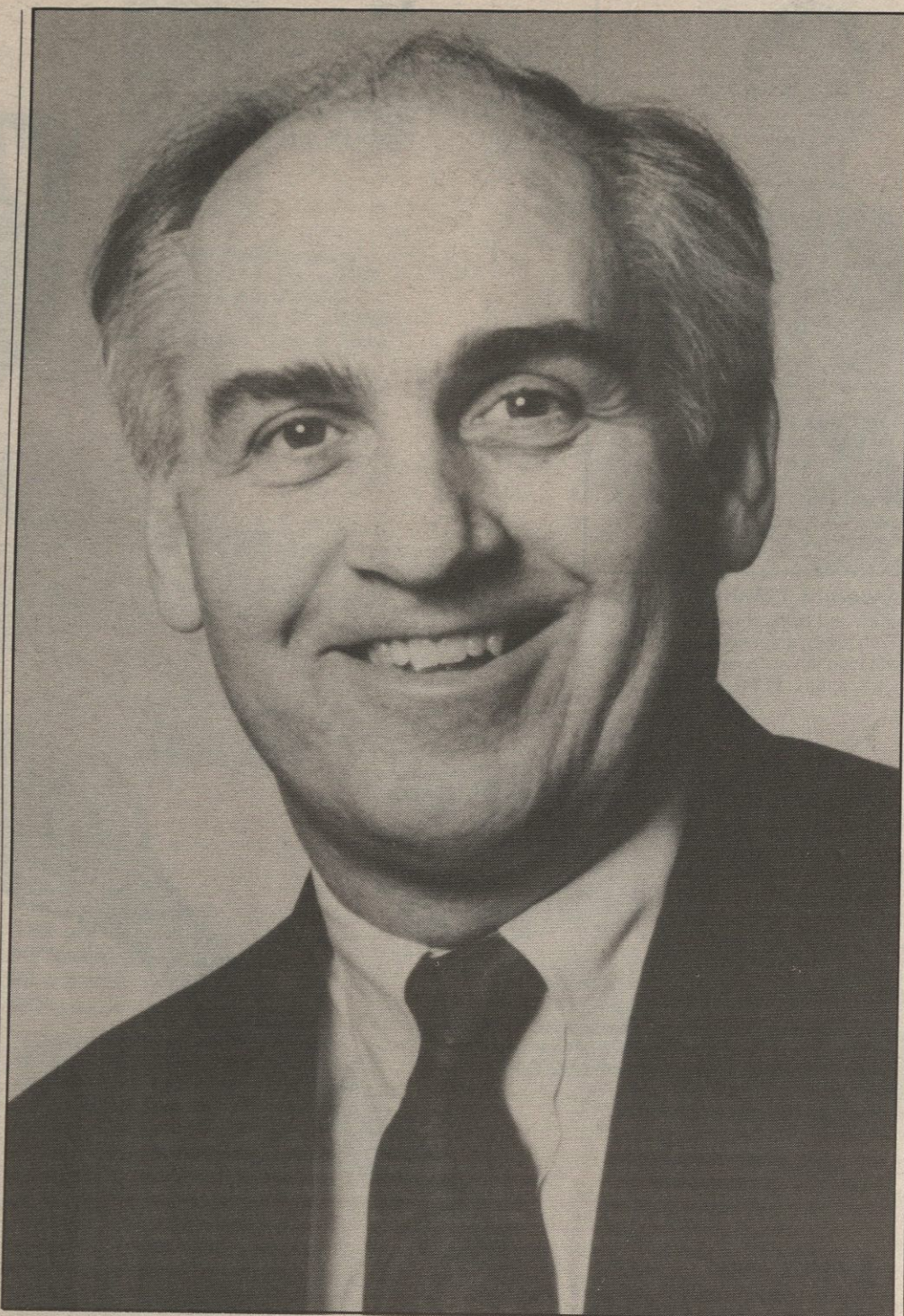
Somewhere between the two lies Billy Packer. His delivery is spunkier than McGuire's but less frantic than Vitale's. He knows the game inside and out, but rarely blows his horn about it. As a result, Packer comes across as a guy who's sitting in your living room having a light discussion about basketball, not an ex-coach talking down to the viewer. Packer, a successful businessman, considers color commenting his hobby, and perhaps this is the main reason why his delivery does not have the life or death tone of his peers, because to him basketball is not that important. **CELTICS PRIDE** spoke with Billy Packer the other day about the Celtic's rookies and this year's crop of potential draftees.

CELTICS PRIDE: After receiving his share of criticism early in the season, Michael Smith has been getting more playing time for the Celtics and he appears to be responding. What is your opinion of Michael Smith as a pro?

Billy Packer: I had seen Michael play early in the career at BYU, and then of course he went off on his two year sabbatical. He's always been a player with excellent knowledge of the game, he's a good passer and he's a good shooter. I thought he was a very good pro prospect and he has the potential to have a very long-standing career, particularly with a team that's willing to be patient enough to let him grow into his role.

CELTICS PRIDE: His stock dropped his senior year at Brigham Young. Why?

Billy Packer: I think it's a case where everybody is hung up on this prototype basketball player where everybody has to have a certain build and have certain athletic abilities to be successful. Michael Jordan represents one prototype. Michael Smith is not the quickest player afoot, but neither was Larry Bird when he came out of



college. I'm not saying he's going to be Larry Bird, but there are certain guys that, because of their size and abilities, fit into the right role with the right team. I think that's the case in Boston.

CELTICS PRIDE: How about Charles Smith? He seems to beat the odds wherever he plays.

Billy Packer: Smitty's problem is a size problem. As a professional player, his size and lack of great shooting range hurts him. Also, without Muggsy Bogues type quickness, it's hard to play in the NBA at that size. But he's an overachiever — a guy who gave John Thompson everything that was asked of him at Georgetown. It's well known now that he was recruited to Georgetown under the basis that he'd probably never be a starter and that, if anything, he'd be used as a defensive

player. Charles Smith was a stock player who developed into the best player in the Big East his senior year. He's a smart kid and he has a great heart. With time, he's going to fit in the NBA, although I never expect him to become a star player.

CELTICS PRIDE: Early indications are that this is not going to be a terribly deep year in the draft. What's your opinion of this year's crop of seniors?

Billy Packer: There are more quality players in basketball today than there ever were before. What makes a good draft class now is whether or not there's a quality big man to be had. But there are only certain eras where you have big men coming into the league, and that's not the senior class at all this year. If someone is looking for someone to fill the middle for them as a starting player and make them a

championship caliber team, that guy is not out there. But as far as quality players are concerned, there are plenty of them.

CELTICS PRIDE: If you could make the first pick in the draft right now, who would you take?

Billy Packer: You can't really say because you don't know who's going to be available. If, all of a sudden, Dennis Scott is available, then you might change your mind if you had the first pick. Or if Shaquell O'Neal decided to turn pro, then he becomes the guy you step back and say, Holy Mackerell! Here's a guy who's our center for the next ten years! So I think it's impossible to say who your number one pick would be until you know who's going to be available.

CELTICS PRIDE: In the search for big men, more and more teams are turning to Europe. Do you see this trend continuing in the future?

Billy Packer: I think there will be more European players, not only in the college ranks but also in the NBA. It's a big world out there, and basketball is a sport that is played at a high caliber in more countries than any other sport in the world, including soccer.

CELTICS PRIDE: The University of Connecticut has probably been the biggest surprise of the year in the NCAA, and the Huskies are led by Nadav Henefeld from Israel. Does it surprise you to see such a quality player come out of Israel?

Billy Packer: Actually, Israel has a significant advantage over a lot of European countries because a lot of guys of Jewish descent who were outstanding college basketball players have gone to Israel over the last 15-20 years and developed the country's basketball program. So it doesn't surprise me to see someone coming out of there not only with the skill level he has, but also with the knowledge to be a good player.

CELTICS PRIDE: Rumor has it that you're quite a businessman.

Billy Packer: My wife doesn't think so. But I get involved in a number of things: real estate, promotional ideas. Some work, some don't.

CELTICS PRIDE: Is it difficult to balance the business career with the broadcasting?

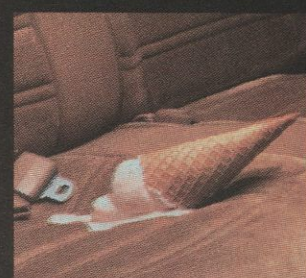
Billy Packer: Actually broadcasting helps my business because I get all that free travel. Broadcasting is a lot of fun, though. You get free cokes at halftime, the network sends you a check when you get home, they pay your way there and you don't have to buy a ticket for the game. Basically, it's like getting paid for your hobby.

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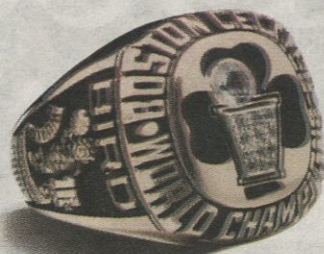
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